

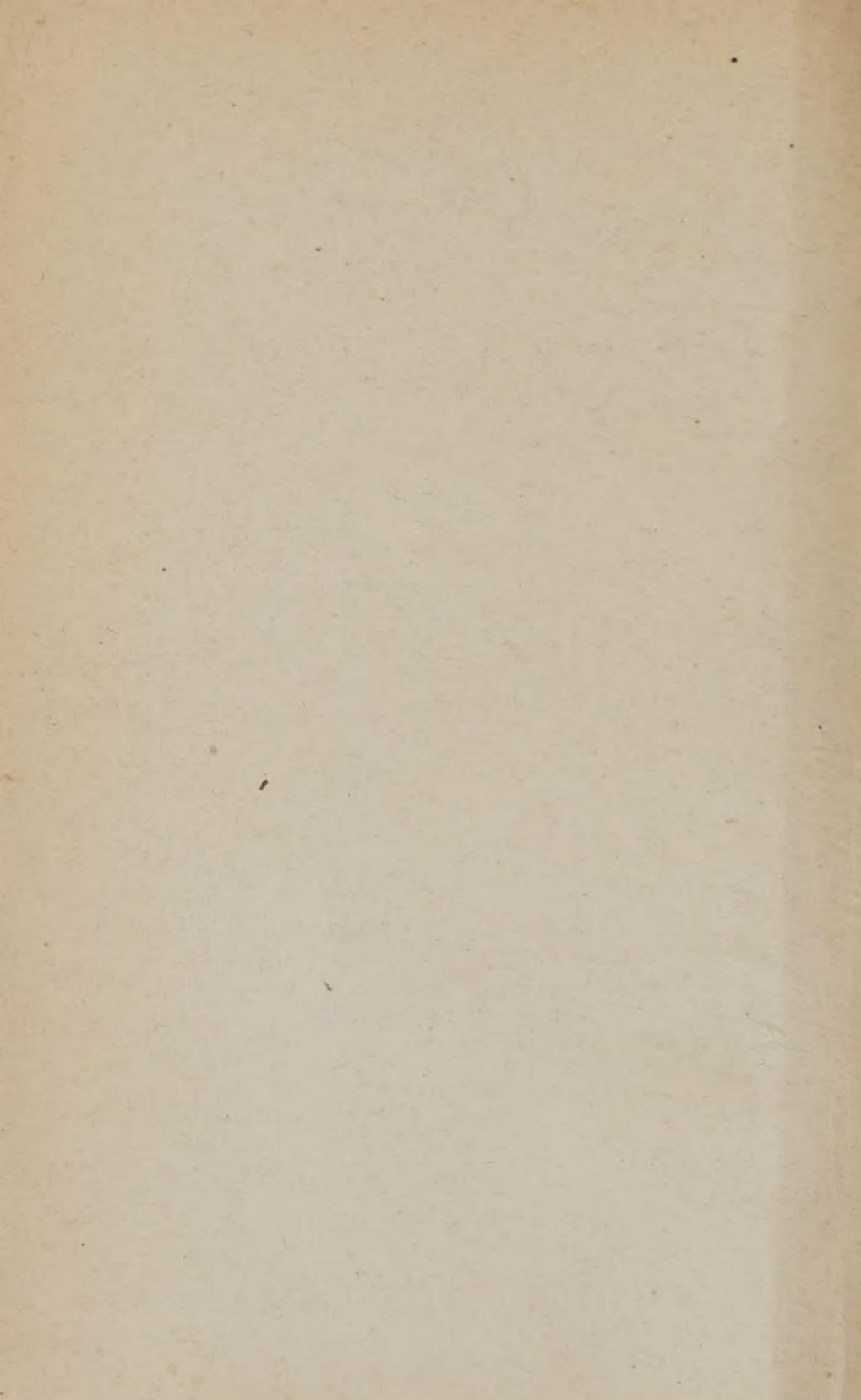


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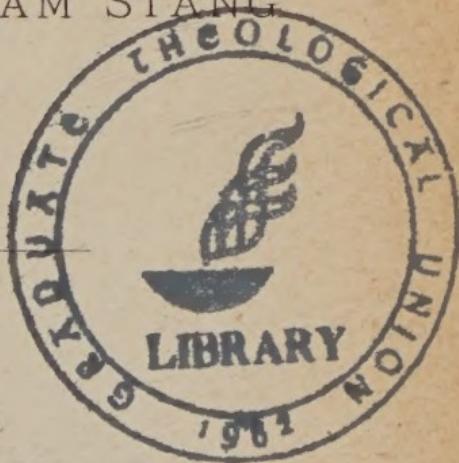
MARTIN LUTHER.



THE LIFE  
OF  
MARTIN LUTHER.

Compiled from Reliable Sources

BY  
REV. WILLIAM STANG



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## PREFACE.

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IN May last, Emperor William, head of the Protestant Church of Prussia, issued a decree proclaiming a special observance of the 10th and 11th days of next November, to honor the 400th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. The occasion, we may presume, will call forth from protestant pulpits the usual invectives against medieval ignorance and darkness, papal tyranny and the errors of the Roman Church. Luther meanwhile will be shown up wreathed in a halo of glory and sanctity, a Reformer of Christ's Church, an apostle of liberty, an enlightener of the people, the destroyer of the papacy, etc. Four hundred long years, indeed, since the birth of a man who aimed such heavy blows at the papacy, who wrote : "Living, O pope, I was thy pest, and dying I shall be thy death ;" and the Catholic Church is living still ; unchanged save that she is stronger and more united than in Luther's time, while his doctrinal opinions have been so blown about by every wind of change that, were he to come back, on his anniversary, he could scarcely look with a fatherly eye on modern Protestantism.

Christ, the eternal truth, solemnly declared to St. Peter : “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matth. XVI, 18). Luther laughed at the fulfilment of this divine promise and often prophesied the downfall of the papacy. “God is not as man that He should lie, nor as the son of man that He should be changed. Hath He said then, and will He not do? hath He spoken and will He not fulfil?” (Num. XXIII, 19.)

“To say that the Church can fail,” Cardinal Newman truly remarks, “or the See of St. Peter can fail, is to deny the faithfulness of Almighty God to His word.”

The Catholic Church was in the world more than 1400 years when Luther was born ; she had been living since the day, when Christ said to His apostles and to their successors : “Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Matth. XXVIII, 20.) And now, 400 years after Luther’s birth, have the words of Christ failed? Has the pope ceased to govern, according to the prediction of Martin Luther? “Why,” the same learned Cardinal Newman exclaims, “there never has been a time, since the first age of the Church, when there has been such a succession of holy popes, as since the Reformation. Protestantism has been a great infliction on such as have succumbed to it; but it has even wrought benefits for those whom it has failed to seduce.”

The so-called reformation inflicted a wound upon the Church, but this wound, as Möhler well observes, “served for the discharge of impurities which wicked men had introduced into the body of the Church—a thought full of comfort where there are so many painful reflections.”

The following historical sketch is intended to show whether Martin Luther was that great hero and saintly reformer of whom we read such wonderful tales in anti-catholic text-books and encyclopaedias; whether by his life and his works he was qualified to be “a prophet amongst a fallen people.” We simply lay facts before the reader, facts taken mainly from Luther’s numerous writings and gleaned from the Church Histories of Dr. Alzog and Cardinal Hergenröther, and especially from the learned and classical work of Johannes Janssen.

An impartial protestant critic says of Professor Janssen’s “History of the German People”: “Here again is a prodigy of catholicity: as Dr. Möhler’s Symbolism stirred up high waves in the dead sea of German learning, so this book, and in a greater degree, causes the highest excitement in all circles. Profound erudition, a far-reaching view over several scientific branches, a rich and varied originality, an extraordinary talent for skilful transitions, a vigorous style. No polemics in this book. Its fundamental tone is strongly religious and patriotic.”

Facts cannot be argued away. They may be denied; yet

they remain inexorable and sometimes even seem, as Montaigne says, impudent to those who are anxious to make away with them forever.

“*Totius iniustitiae nulla capitalior est, quam eorum, qui cum maxime fallunt id agunt ut viri boni esse videantur*”—“No injustice is greater than that of those who when they practice the worst deception, act in such a manner as to appear good men.” These words of the great Roman may partly serve to explain, how that man’s memory is honored who brought unspeakable woe and misery upon his country, and whose personal character was far from being praiseworthy.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.,

Feast of the Assumption, 1883.

# I.

MARTIN LUTHER was born at Eisleben, on the tenth day of November, in the year 1483 or 1484,—it is uncertain which. His father, Hans Luther, had a farm in Möhra which he cultivated; but before Martin's birth he had to leave this and flee for his life, because in a violent passion he had killed a peasant.<sup>1</sup>

The years of Martin's childhood were hard and cheerless, not only because he shared the extreme poverty of his parents, but also on account of the immoderate severity with which he was treated at home and in school. As examples of the harsh treatment to which he was subjected, he tells us that on one occasion his mother flogged him cruelly on account of a worthless little nut, and that at another time he was punished so mercilessly by his father that he determined to run away from home; at school, too, he received in one forenoon fifteen blows. But in spite of all this flogging and trembling he learned, as he confesses,<sup>2</sup> merely nothing. This treatment rather produced in him a timid disposition, and suppressed the cheerful obedience which he might otherwise have acquired; it could intimidate the violence of his character, but could not remove it.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Luther, *Geschichtliche Notizen*. Wittenberg 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgens, *Luther's Leben*. Leipzig 1846. I, 151—160.

At the age of fourteen, Martin went to Magdeburg and in the following year he set out for Eisenach to attend the Latin school. He was so poor that he was obliged to support himself by singing in the street. During this part of his life, the solemn ceremonies of the Church, the religious dramas and especially the German sacred hymns, which were wont to be sung during divine service by the entire congregation, had a soothing influence upon him.

In his seventeenth year, while he was yet studying at Eisenach, his circumstances changed for the better. Frau Cotta, a lady of nobility, took him under her protection, and in her house he caught his first glimpses of the sunnier side of life.

He entered the university of Erfurt in 1501, and immediately began to study philosophy and law. In 1502, he received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy and three years later, that of Magister. For a short time after this, he lectured on natural philosophy at the university. During these years, his favorite authors were the pagan classics. He read Cicero, Livy, Virgil and Plautus, and attended the humanistic lectures of Jerome Emser. He regarded the classical authors as the masters and trainers of his mind, and became intimately acquainted with several eminent humanists of the time. Nevertheless he himself was better known among his friends as a musician and philosopher than as a classical scholar. He enjoyed at this time the pleasures of social life; he took part in boar-hunting and other knightly amusements; but his disposition, which had lately grown somewhat joyous, would often give way suddenly to a gloomy, morbid humour and to scruples of conscience.

In 1505, Martin was deeply affected by the sudden death of a friend. In the same year, while travelling near Erfurt, he was overtaken by a thunder-storm which brought his life into great danger. "When I was surrounded," he wrote afterwards,<sup>1</sup> "with terror and the fear of death, I made a forced vow." This, as he announced to his friends at a supper and musical entertainment to which he had invited them, was a promise to renounce the world and become an Augustinian monk. "You see me to-day," he said, "but henceforth no more." All the arguments which his friends used to dissuade him from the course he had chosen, were fruitless; and on the night of July 17th, 1505, they accompanied him weeping to the gate of the monastery. It is worthy of notice here that the only books which Luther brought with him to the monastery, were the poets Virgil and Plautus. "How many," said the Dominican prior, Peter Schwarz, "learn poetry; and how few the Gospels! How many study law; and how few the Sacred Scripture!" Luther, it appears, was one of the 'many'; he might have had a happier career if he belonged to the 'few.'

It is an established fact that the study of the Bible flourished during the fifteenth century in a great majority of the colleges and universities. The schools which Luther attended, must have been very exceptional, for he writes: "I was twenty years old, and had not yet seen a bible." (*Luther's Sämtliche Werke*. Erlangen 1826–1868; Frankfurt 1862–1870.—See vol. 60, p. 255.)

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, *Luther's Briefe, etc.*, Berlin 1825–1828. Vol. II, p. 101.

## II.

"I entered the convent and left the world," he says, "because I despaired of myself."<sup>1</sup> Hans Luther distrusted his son's vocation and wished to see him take a high position in the world. He, therefore, decidedly opposed the course which Martin was now pursuing; but in spite of this opposition, Luther made his solemn vows, in 1507, to persevere until death in poverty, chastity and obedience according to the rule of St. Augustine. Shortly afterwards he was ordained a priest. He was so greatly agitated while saying his first mass, that he would have stopped at the Canon and come down from the altar, had not the prior hindered him.<sup>2</sup> Evidently he was led to the monastery by a sudden, violent resolution which sprang from a morbid discord in his character, and not by a true vocation. His father said to him after ordination: "Contrary to the fourth commandment, you have left me and your mother in our old age, when we expected help and consolation from you after expending so much upon your education."<sup>3</sup>

Luther now sought to obtain the gift of peace, as a monk; but he used means which only made his

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgens 1, 522.

<sup>2</sup> Alzog's Church History, vol. III, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ratzinger, *Handschriftliche Geschichte, etc.*, Jena 1850. See p. 48.

condition worse. Nourished by the solitude of monastery life, his scrupulousness assumed a very dismal form. He lacked simple obedience to the rules of his order. He was morally bound to recite the divine office daily; but sometimes, yielding to a passionate inclination for study, he would not touch his Breviary for weeks at a time. Then he would try to atone for his neglect by locking himself up in a cell and fasting. One day he chastised himself so severely that he missed sleep for five weeks, and narrowly escaped from falling into a mental disorder.<sup>1</sup>

He thought the mortifications which the rule of his order prescribed, were not enough for him. "I proposed special tasks to myself," he writes, "and had my own ways. My superiors fought against this singularity, and they did so rightly. I was an infamous persecutor and murderer of my own life because I fasted, prayed, watched and tried myself beyond my powers, which was nothing but suicide."<sup>2</sup> To him applied well the old monastic proverb: "Everything beyond obedience looks suspicious in a monk."

Like all those given to scrupulousness, he saw in himself nothing but sin, and in God nothing but anger and revenge. His contrition was lacking in humble love and filial hope in God's mercy through the merits of Jesus Christ. He felt himself in continual fear and trembling before God, and he wished to appease the divine wrath by his own justice and

<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, *Commentarius historicus, etc.*, Francofurti 1692. Vide vol. I, 21<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgens I, 577-585.

the power of works. "I am," he said, "a most presumptuous justifier (*praesumptuosissimus justitarius*), who trust not in God's justice, but in my own." As a consequence of this folly, he became subject to fits of melancholy and discouragement, so that he even hated God and wished that he had never been born. "I had a false confidence in my own righteousness, and in my heart an eternal distrust and despair, hatred and blasphemy against God. I became such an enemy to Christ that whenever I saw his picture or likeness, as he hung upon the cross, I was terrified and closed my eyes, and would rather have seen the devil."<sup>1</sup> Afterwards, strange to say, he believed that this sad condition of his soul resulted from the doctrine of the Church on good works; whereas in reality he was always in perfect contradiction to this part of the Church's doctrine. His tortured conscience found but little relief in the tribunal of penance. He made a general confession in Erfurt; and in 1510, when sent to Rome to transact some business for his order, he tried to ease his soul by another general confession.

When Luther saw the Eternal City for the first time, he fell upon his knees and exclaimed: "Hail! Rome, holy city, thrice sanctified by the blood of the martyrs!"<sup>2</sup> He paid visits to the shrines and sanctuaries with great fervor and devotion, and in his oddness he "almost regretted that his parents were not already dead so that he might release their souls from purgatory by saying masses, reciting prayers and doing good works." So great was his

<sup>1</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>2</sup> Luther's *Werke*, Halle, XXII, 2574.

veneration and enthusiasm for the Holy Pontiff, that he said: "I was ready to slay, if I could, all those who should even by one syllable contradict the pope."

On his return to Germany, he was declared Licentiate of Theology. This happened on October 18th, 1512, and on the following day he was endowed with the Doctorate. "I was obliged," he says, "to take the degree of Doctor and to promise under oath that I would preach the Holy Scriptures, which are very dear to me, faithfully and without adulteration." At this time he took up the studies of Greek and Hebrew, in order to fit himself for teaching the Bible. He then began his lectures on the Psalms and on the Epistles of St. Paul at the university of Wittenberg. He also lectured on St. Augustine, to whose works his attention had been directed by his Provincial, Dr. Staupitz; and he preached regularly in the Augustinian church. "Even at this early age," says Dr. Alzog, "he had already embraced, in a confused way, the doctrine that good works are wholly worthless and that faith alone is all-sufficient for salvation."

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmmtliche Werke*, 40, 284.

### III.

The decided turn in the development of Luther's teaching seems to have taken place during the years 1513 and 1514. In 1515, as Matthesius testifies, he was already called a heretic.<sup>1</sup> So convinced was he of his doctrine on justification, that in a letter to George Spenlein, the Augustinian, dated April 7th, 1516, he writes: "Accursed is he who does not believe this."<sup>2</sup> He called this doctrine the "Confession of St. Augustine." It soon ruled the university of Wittenberg and on the 31st of October, 1517, it began to spread throughout Germany.

On this memorable day, Luther fixed upon the doors of Wittenberg copies of ninety-five theses for a disputation on the efficacy of indulgences. He found occasion for this proceeding in the sermons of John Tetzel, a Dominican friar and a powerful popular preacher, who had been chosen by Albert, Archbishop of Mentz and Prince Elector, to publish in the north of Germany the indulgence which Leo X. had just granted to the Catholic world. The proceeds of this indulgence were to be devoted to the building of St. Peter's Basilica at Rome. Tetzel preached before large crowds of people. In his instructions to pastors and confessors he required the

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<sup>1</sup> Matthesius, *Historien*, etc. Nürnberg 1570. See Hist. 9.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette I, 18.

necessary conditions prescribed by the Church for the gaining of indulgences, the receiving of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. The preachers of the indulgence were required to lead a good life and to avoid taverns, suspicious intercourse and all unnecessary expense. Nevertheless, the enforcements of the Holy See were sometimes neglected; and it is a sad truth that the personal appearance of some preachers together with the manner in which they offered and praised the indulgence, was the cause of great scandal.

It was not, however, these abuses that made Luther raise his voice against indulgences. It was the doctrine itself, which the Church proclaims upon this subject and which is directly opposed to Luther's views on justification. In his Lenten sermons, in 1517, he said: "Christ puts satisfaction into the heart; therefore, you need not go to Rome nor Jerusalem nor St. James', nor wander about after an indulgence."<sup>1</sup> Again, in a letter to Tetzel, he wrote: "Do not be disturbed; because the war was not begun on your account, but the child has another father."<sup>2</sup> These passages indicate a deeper reason for his attack upon indulgences than could be found in the mere abuses.

Luther, however, in his propositions professes adherence to the Catholic doctrine on indulgences. In his seventy-first thesis, he says: "Whosoever speaks against the truth of papal indulgences, let him be anathema." This open contradiction in his theses can be explained only by the fact that he was at

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke* 21, 212.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette—Seidemann 6, 18.

that time completely ignorant about the nature and effect of indulgences. He afterwards confessed as much. "Upon my salvation," he said, "I knew no more at that time what an indulgence was, than did those who came to inquire of me."<sup>1</sup>

Towards the close of 1517, Tetzel took the degree of Doctor of Theology at the university of Frankfort on the Oder. On this occasion he answered Luther by one hundred and six counter-theses, in which he clearly and concisely defended the Church's doctrine on indulgences. He said correctly: "Indulgences do not forgive sin, but only the temporal punishment due to sin, and this only when the sin has been sincerely repented of and confessed; indulgences do not detract from the merits of Christ, but in place of satisfactory punishment they put the satisfactory passion of Christ." Dr. Hefele thinks that Tetzel understood thoroughly the difficult doctrine on indulgences and that his propositions are decidedly better than the famous obelisks of Dr. Eck.<sup>2</sup> Be this as it may, there is no doubt but that the clear mind of Tetzel saw plainly that the controversy which Luther had aroused was not merely a quarrel of the schools, but a deep and significant contest on the Catholic principles of faith and authority. In another refutation of Luther's new doctrine, given in 1518, Tetzel said: "These articles lead to contempt for Pope and Church. Thus Christendom would fall into great danger; every one could believe as he liked; one could interpret the scripture after his own fashion."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luth. Op. VII., 462.

<sup>2</sup> *Tübinger Quartalschrift*, 1854, p. 631.

<sup>3</sup> Gröne, Tetzel and Luther. Soest and Olpe 1853. See pp. 103—109.

The Emperor Maximilian also recognized the full importance of the controversy. In a letter to the Pope, dated Aug. 5th, 1518, he declared that Luther's innovations, if they were not suppressed, would endanger the unity of faith and would replace revealed truth with private opinion.<sup>1</sup>

During all this time Luther imagined his cause the cause of God, and proposed his views and opinions as truths already granted. He even pretended to have his doctrine directly from God and desired that the whole Church should be converted to his new gospel "on justification by faith alone, without good works;" he would submit to Pope and Church only after such a conversion. In his mad presumption he even went so far as to declare : "I wish to have my doctrine judged by nobody—not even by angels. He who does not receive my teaching, may not be saved."<sup>2</sup> And yet at this time he had not formally separated himself from the Church; he even seemed to abhor such a course: "I never approved of a schism, nor will I approve of it for all eternity." In February, 1519, he wrote: "No cause is so great or could become so great that one should separate himself from the Roman Church; nay, for no sin or evil whatsoever that one might name or think of, should one divide charity or spiritual unity."<sup>3</sup>

One of the reformer's ablest adversaries was John Eck, Doctor of Theology and Vice-Chancellor of Ingolstadt University, whom Luther himself acknowledged a man of learning and genius. Possessing

<sup>1</sup> *Lutheri opera latina*. Francofurti 1865—1868. See 2, 349—350.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke* 28, 144.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke* 24, 8.

a broad and acute intellect, which he had endowed with vast stores of philosophical and theological learning, and gifted with a wonderful memory, he was in every respect superior to Luther. Dr. Eck, in a little pamphlet, set forth the doctrine of the Church in a very learned but admirably classical style. Luther answered this in a manner so entirely illogical and abusive that it was beneath his dignity either as doctor of divinity or professor at an university.

At about this time Luther sent his theses and their defense to Pope Leo X, and in a letter to that pontiff feigned entire submission to the Holy See and the commands of his superiors. "Most Holy Father," he wrote, "I cast myself at thy feet with all that I have and am. Give life or take it; call, recall; approve, reprove; your voice is that of Christ, who presides and speaks in you."<sup>1</sup> The insincerity of these words can be explained only by the uncommon duplicity of Luther's character.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Latin Document in Audin's Life of Luther, vol. 1.

## IV.

On the 9th of Nov., 1518, Leo X issued his bull, "*Cum postquam*", in which he gave a full explanation of the Catholic doctrine upon indulgences, in order, as he said, "that no one might have a pretext for pleading ignorance of the Roman Church's true teaching on indulgences." Some months before this he had sent Cardinal Cajetan as a legate to Augsburg to give Luther a hearing and to call him back from his errors. Luther was summoned to Augsburg, and a convention took place in October 1518. Cajetan received him with the greatest kindness and exhorted him to renounce his errors and to return like a repenting son to his mother the Church. But the kind offers of the Cardinal were rejected. Luther departed from Augsburg in secrecy, leaving behind him an appeal from the pope ill-informed to the pope better-instructed.

As the religious quarrels grew more serious and dangerous every day, a second legate was sent to Germany. This was the pope's chamberlain, Charles Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman. He met Luther at Altenburg in January, 1519, and soon won the latter's confidence by his tenderness and kindness. Luther promised to keep silent if his adversaries would do the same. He even wrote a letter to the pope on March 3rd, 1519, in which he said: "I have been unnecessarily, excessively and abusively severe in my

treatment of those empty babblers. I had only one end in view, viz.: to prevent our mother, the Roman Church, from being soiled by the filth of another's avarice and the faithful from being led into error and taught to place indulgences before charity. Now, Most Holy Father, I protest before God and his creatures that it has never been my purpose, nor is it now, to do aught that might tend to weaken or overthrow the authority of the Roman Church or that of Your Holiness ; nay, more, I confess that the power of this Church is above all things ; that nothing in heaven or on earth is to be set before it, Jesus, the Lord of all, alone excepted."<sup>1</sup> On the 12th of the same month and year, the detestable hypocrite wrote to his friend Spalatinus : "I whisper to you, in sooth, I know not whether the Pope is Anti-christ or his apostle."<sup>2</sup>

A few months after this, Dr. Eck was forced into a disputation at Leipzig with Andrew Carlstadt, the friend and colleague of Luther who had placed the Doctor's cap upon his head. Ernest Adolphus, Bishop of Merseburg, had expressly forbidden this disputation ; but nevertheless it was opened on June 24th, 1519, in the hall of Pleissenburg Castle. It was attended by George, Duke of Saxony, and a learned audience. On one side stood Luther and Carlstadt together with the professors of Wittenberg ; on the other was Dr. Eck with the professors of Cologne, Louvain and Leipzig.

Carlstadt, who spoke first, asserted, like Luther, that man since the fall of our first parents had not

<sup>1</sup> Latin Document in Audin's Life of Luther, vol. I, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette I, 239.

possessed any liberty whatever and that his works, whether good or bad, were always offensive to God. Dr. Eck then replied. He showed amid the cheering of the whole assembly that such a doctrine was absurd and offended not only God, but his creatures.

"Carlstadt and Eck", says the historian Menzel, "disputed upon free will; Carlstadt, like Luther, denied human liberty,—an opinion as false as it is repugnant to common sense. After he had been defeated by Eck, who was superior to him in eloquence and had good sense and authority on his side, the controversy was resumed." Next came the question of the papal primacy. Luther, having witnessed the humiliating defeat of Carlstadt, took the disputation up himself. Dr. Eck deduced the divine origin of the papacy from the words of Christ : "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Luther, in his reply, rejected the Scriptural interpretations of the Fathers, the decrees of the Council of Constance, the infallibility of the Ecumenical Councils and the primacy of the pope. When reproached for defending condemned Hussite propositions, he grew angry and violent, shouting confusedly in German and Latin. Everyone could see that he was no longer a Catholic. Duke George, astonished and provoked at the bold heretical assertions of the monk, exclaimed in an angry voice : "Indeed this is dangerous", (*Das walt die Sucht*).

On July 14th, Carlstadt resumed the disputation on free will. Though he defended several untenable theses, he showed more skill than during his first defense. Luther, however, did not await the end of the controversy, but left Leipzig suddenly. He was

as much dissatisfied with his reception in the city and the honors shown to his adversaries as with the unexpected result of the disputation. The minutes of the discussion were submitted to the universities which had been elected umpires.

The disputation had the good effect of strengthening in the Catholic faith Duke George and the city and university of Leipzig and of making more clear and decided the positions of the parties engaged in it. The decisions rendered by the arbitrating universities of Cologne, on Aug. 30th, and of Louvain on Nov. 5th, 1519, condemned the teaching of Luther as heretical. The reformer had shortly before entitled these judges his masters of Theology; he now called them mules and asses,—Epicurean swine.

In October, 1520, he sent his Treatise on Christian Liberty to Leo X, through Miltitz. He also sent a letter in which he poured forth all the venom of his soul against Rome and the pope, showed the hatred which he harboured for Cardinal Cajetan and Dr. Eck, and gave the clearest proofs of his indomitable pride. He advised the Holy Father to descend from his throne and content himself with a poor curacy. Most legates would have refused to carry such an insolent libel; but the good-natured Miltitz accepted it.

"You, Leo," Luther says in his letter, "are like a lamb in the midst of wolves,—like Daniel among the lions. The See of Rome is unworthy of you; it should be accepted by Satan, who, in truth, reigns more in that Babylon than you do. It would be a blessing for you to lay down the office of the Papacy, which only your most depraved enemies can exult-

ingly represent as an honor, and live upon the trifling income of a priest or upon your hereditary fortune. Only your children of perdition, like Judas Iscariot and his imitators, should revel in the honors of which you are the object.”<sup>1</sup> Roscoe calls this letter “a deadly satire on the Church of Rome.”

Dr. Eck, about this time, endeavored to convince the Prince Elector of the multitude and gravity of Luther’s errors. Failing in this, he set out for Rome in January, 1520, to inform the Apostolic See of the condition of religious affairs in Germany, and to effect, if possible, a speedy decision. Luther, anticipating excommunication and a condemnation of his errors, cunningly sought to deprive the papal decrees of their terror in the eyes of the people, by a pamphlet on excommunication which he published. While Rome was busy examining his works, he wrote two new books in which he denied the doctrine of the sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the mass, solemn vows, the primacy of the pope, the priesthood, etc., etc. These writings were titled : “Address to the Christian German Nobility,” “On the Improvement of Christian Morality,” “On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church,” and “On Christian Liberty.”

Luther’s system had now dwindled down to a religious pantheistical mysticism, the result of his youthful stubbornness and pride together with his religious eccentricities. According to his teaching, the Bible is the only source of faith ; and he interpreted and twisted the language of this holy book after his own fashion, paying no attention whatever

<sup>1</sup> De Wette I, 497.

to rectitude or fitness, and regarding only utility. Sometimes he even changed the words of Scripture. When charged at one time with having added the word "only," to Verse 28, Rom. III., he humbly replied in the polite and courteous manner so peculiar to himself: "Should your Pope give himself any useless annoyance about the word "sola," you may promptly reply: 'It is the will of Dr. Martin Luther that it should be so.'" He brightly remarks upon another occasion: "Pope and jackass are synonymous terms. We are the masters of the papists, not their schoolboys and disciples; and we will not be dictated to by them."<sup>1</sup> And he once said to Spalatinus: "Do you know what I think of Rome? It is a confused collection of fools, ninny-mopes, simpletons, blockheads, demoniacs and devils."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Altona ed., T. V., fol. 2690.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette I, 453.

## V.

"Faith alone," Luther teaches, "works justification; and a man is saved, and his sins are forgiven by confidently believing." Later on, he wrote to Melanchthon: "Be a sinner and sin boldly; but more boldly still believe and rejoice in Christ, who is the conqueror of sin, death and the world. Sin is our lot here below. This life is not the abode of justice; but 'we expect,' says Peter, 'a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells justice.' It is sufficient that by the riches of God's glory we acknowledge the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world; sin cannot deprive us of him, even if in the same day we were to commit a thousand adulteries or a thousand murders."<sup>1</sup> In one of his sermons he exclaimed: "Provided one has faith, adultery is no sin!"<sup>2</sup> Such a doctrine was without doubt very welcome to libertines and robber-knights; and we are not at all surprised to find the monk of Wittenberg soon a boon companion of Ulrich von Hutten, Francis of Sickingen and other monsters of immorality.

In his writings Luther continued to heap imprecation and invective upon Rome.<sup>3</sup> "It would be no wonder," he said, "if God should rain down from

<sup>1</sup> De Wette 2, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Alzog III, 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämml. Werke*, 21, 274 seq.

heaven sulphur and hellish fire upon Rome and plunge it into the abyss, as he did with Sodom and Gomorrha." He preaches an open war against the Eternal City: "If this rage of the Romanists continue, no other remedy appears to me than that emperor, kings and princes should arm themselves and attack this pest of the earth, and decide its affairs no longer with words, but with iron. If we punish thieves by the rope, murderers by the sword and heretics by fire, why do we not attack these teachers of perdition, these cardinals, these popes and the whole swarm of the Roman Sodom that unceasingly corrupt God's Church, and why do we not wash our hands in their blood ?" <sup>1</sup>

These eruptions of unbridled passion seem very characteristic of Luther when we notice several of the expressions which he uses in speaking to his intimate friends. On Aug. 18th, 1520, for example, he wrote to John Lange: "We are convinced here that the Papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist, and we believe that, for the salvation of souls, everything is lawful, in order to deceive and ruin it." <sup>2</sup> In another letter he appears to confess that he has lost all control over himself: "*Compos  
mei non sum; rapior nescio quo spiritu.*" <sup>3</sup>

Some of the ablest theologians of the world were engaged at Rome for several months in extracting the most important errors from Luther's writings. Among these Papal consultors were Petrus de Ascoltis, Cajetan, Sadoletus, Jacovacci, Aegidius of

<sup>1</sup> *Opera latina 2, 79-108.*

<sup>2</sup> De Wette I, 478.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette I, 555.

Viterbo, etc. But only after long and mature deliberation did the gentle and learned Leo X. open his lips, and speak as the successor of St. Peter. On June 15th, 1520, he issued his admirable Bull "*Exsurge, Domine*," in which he condemned the errors of Luther's doctrine, ordered his works to be burned, and declared their author excommunicated unless he should retract at the expiration of sixty days.

The Bull itself was written in a tone rather of paternal affliction than of just severity. "Imitating the clemency of the Almighty," Leo says, "who wills not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live, we shall forget all injuries done to us and to the Apostolic See, and we shall do all we can to make him give up his errors. By the depth of God's mercy and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for the redemption of man and the foundation of the Church, we exhort and pray Luther and his followers to cease disturbing the peace, the unity and the power of the Church."

Thus speaks the generous heart of the Medicean pope, who apparently suffers while he is compelled to chastise a rebellious child. He is still the same man that he was when Erasmus described him as Cardinal de Medicis : "I shall never forget the grace, the beauty, the elegance of manners which struck me on my first interview with the cardinal ; his noble and dignified countenance, the courtesy with which he received me, and the ineffable charm of his conversation. In him shone those qualities which Plato requires in a prince, goodness of heart and learning."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Erasmi*, lit. V, ep. 2.

The execution of the Bull, '*Exsurge*', was entrusted to the papal legates, Aleandro, Carraccioli and Eck. With regard to the followers of the new doctrine, it was a sad mistake that Dr. Eck, who was Luther's great adversary, should have been charged with the publication and execution of the Bull in several of the German dioceses. It was received in Leipzig and Erfurt with sneers and insults, and Eck had to fly from the students of Wittenberg.

But Luther himself paid little heed to the fact that Eck had been chosen ; he had already actually severed himself from the Church. On Nov. 17th, 1520, he appealed from the Holy Pontiff as from "an unjust judge — an obdurate, erring schismatic and heretic, condemned as such by the Bible," to an Ecumenical Council ; and he called upon the emperor and the nobility to resist the unchristian conduct and outrageous violence of the pope. "Whosoever shall follow the pope, him do I, Martin Luther, deliver to the divine judgement."<sup>1</sup> "Never since the beginning of the world," he wrote on Nov. 4th to Spalatinus, "did Satan so shamefully speak against God as in this Bull ; it is impossible that he can be saved who adheres to it, or does not reject it."<sup>2</sup> In his pamphlet "Against the Execrable Bull of Anti-christ" he says : "What mule, what ass, what mole, what stock may not discharge the functions of judge ? Has not your vile face blushed thus to dare, with words of smoke, to oppose the thunders of the Gospel ?"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtl. Werke*, 24, 34.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette 1, 578.

<sup>3</sup> *Opera Lutheri*, II, 89.

But Luther was not satisfied with having vomited forth in his writings insult and basest calumny against the Apostolic See. On Dec. 10th, 1520, he assembled the students and other inhabitants of Wittenberg at the Elster-Gate around a large pile of wood. After this had been set fire to, the Body of Canon Law together with the writings of Eck, Emser and others was thrown into the flames. At length Luther himself flung the Bull '*Exsurge*' into the fire, exclaiming : "Thou hast disturbed the Lord's Holy One ; therefore shalt thou be consumed in fire eternal !" The emotions that filled his heart upon this occasion, found full vent in his speech to the students on the following day. "It is now full time," he said, "that the pope himself were burned. My meaning is that the Papal Chair, its false teachings and its abominations should be given to the flames."<sup>1</sup> About the same time he wrote to Spalatinus : "I begin to believe that the papacy, thus far unconquerable, can be destroyed and that its last day is nigh."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. latina* V, 252—256.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette I, 533.

## VI.

In the meantime, Charles V, son of Philip the Fair, had succeeded his grandfather, the generous Maximilian. He was crowned Emperor of Germany on October 22d, 1520, at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was clearly Luther's interest to seek the favor of the young emperor; he, therefore, addressed a letter to him, in which, among other things, he said: "I, poor and mendicant, cast myself at your Royal Majesty's feet. For three years, I have been the object of hatred, insults and dangers. In vain have I cried for mercy; in vain offered to be silent; in vain proposed terms of peace; in vain demanded to be informed. They seek to stifle me and the Gospel. After all my endeavors nothing remains to me but to invoke the aid of your Imperial Majesty after the example of St. Athanasius. Dear Prince of the kings of the earth, I embrace your knees; may Your Majesty condescend to take me,—or rather the truth, for which alone you are armed with the sword,—under your wings, and protect me only until I know whether I am vanquisher or vanquished. If I am convicted of impiety or heresy, I have nothing more to ask from you."<sup>1</sup>

The new emperor was not well instructed in the German religious quarrels; but, being well educated in the Catholic faith and zealously devoted to it,

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<sup>1</sup> Audin I, 471. (Latin Document.)

he allowed the papal nuncios to burn Luther's writings. He declined, however, to issue an edict against him, and declared it his intention to summon Luther before the diet of Worms, which was to meet on January 28th, 1521. The papal legate, Aleandro, protested against this proceeding; Luther had already been judged and excommunicated by Rome, and it could no longer be a question for a secular court when Rome had spoken. The States, however, declined to yield to Aleandro's demand, and the emperor sent a letter of safe conduct to Luther, calling him to Worms. "You have," said Charles in his letter, "neither violence nor ambuscade to fear. We wish you to confide in our word." No wonder that Luther so bravely determined to go to Worms, even at the risk of his life, and that he wrote so heroically to Spalatinus: "I shall go to Worms, even if there were as many devils there as there are tiles on the roofs of Wittenberg."<sup>1</sup> In another letter, dated March 24th, 1521, he says: "They labor for my recantation. Well! I shall recant, and say: 'I have from the first maintained that the pope was the vicar of Christ; I now retract, and say, the pope is the devil's apostle.'"<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Luther continued to excite the people against the head of the Church. In a sermon which he delivered on the feast of the Epiphany, 1521, he compared the pope to Herod, "who with a false heart dares to adore Christ and wishes to cut his throat. The pope's regimen and Christ's king-

<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf, 162.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette 1, 580.

dom are as much opposed to each other as water to fire and devil to angel.”<sup>1</sup> In a German pamphlet, published on March 1st, he styles the pope “worse than all devils because he condemns faith, which the devil never did.” “As I call the pope the greatest murderer that the earth has borne since the beginning, who kills soul and body, I am,—praised be God!—an heretic in the eyes of His Holiness and the papists.”<sup>2</sup>

On his way to Worms, Luther was warmly received by the people of Erfurt while passing through that city. Crotus Rubianus, Rector of the University, with forty members of that famous school, greeted him at his entrance into the town. On the following day, he preached in the Augustinian church, and, as usual, thundered against pope and priests. The people were so worked up by his sermon that, on the day after his departure, they made a furious attack upon the residence of the canons, destroying books, images, furniture, etc. The canons themselves escaped the mob’s fury by flight. These were the first fruits of the “New Gospel.” In Reinhardtsbrunn Luther exhorted the superior of the monastery “to say an ‘Our Father’ for our Lord Christ, that his father may be propitious to him;” for Christ’s and Luther’s cause were one and the same.<sup>3</sup>

On April 16th, 1521, the reformer arrived in Worms, and on the following day he appeared before the Diet. He was asked by John von Eck,

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 16, 39–40.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 24, 96 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Ratzenberger 50.

Chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves, the double question: whether he was the author of twenty volumes placed upon a table near by, and whether he was willing to retract the teachings contained in them. To the first part of the question Luther answered affirmatively. For the other part he requested time to consider. Though such a request was very silly, the mild and clement Charles V. granted it. If Luther retracted, he would have to renounce his popularity and the system that had grown up with him; if he did not retract, he would appear plainly as an obdurate heretic. He chose the latter course, and, on the following day, being encouraged by some of the German nobility, he refused to recant.

The emperor was not favorably impressed by the vain monk's rough and sensuous figure. He said: "This man will never make me a heretic."<sup>1</sup> On April 19th, he sent a paper to the States, written in French and English with his own hand. "After the example of our forefathers," he said, in this paper, "we will cling strongly and faithfully to the Christian faith and the Roman Church, and believe rather the holy fathers, assembled in general councils, than this one friar. I repent of having waited so long, instead of having proceeded against him earnestly. Luther shall withdraw from this hour. I shall keep the word I have given, and the free safe-conduct. Take care that he returns safely to whence he came. But I forbid him to preach his pernicious doctrine to the people and thus to excite disorders."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hergenröther: *Kirchengeschichte II*, 256.

<sup>2</sup> Förstemann's *Urkundenbuch*. Hamburg 1842. Vol. I, p. 25.

Several princes obtained from Charles V. a delay of a few days. During this time John von Eck, Cochlaeus and Archbishop Greifenklau tried vainly in private conferences to reclaim the rebellious monk. Luther, like Pelagius and Arius of old, and, in fact, every other heretic, sought to support his doctrines by texts from the Bible. The entreaties and kind reproofs of his friends only confirmed him in his errors, and he boldly exclaimed: "If this work be of man, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

At the expiration of this time, the emperor, tired of the fruitless endeavors to reconcile the monk, and shocked, moreover, by his scandalous conduct,<sup>1</sup> ordered him to quit the city at once. Luther departed. On his way to Wittenberg, he was seized upon, as he had pre-arranged with the Elector of Saxony, by five masked men, and carried to the Castle Wartburg. He lived here, dressed as a knight and under the assumed name of Younker George, from May, 1521, to March, 1522.

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<sup>1</sup> Alzog III, 40.

## VII.

By order of the emperor, the papal legate, Alean-dro, drew up an edict against the Augustinian monk in the form of the ancient imperial decrees. Luther and his followers were banned the Empire ; his writings were condemned to the flames.

Luther's teachings deprived man of all free-will, and therefore levelled him with the beast and shook society to its very foundation. Charles, as guardian of civil society, was bound in conscience to eradicate the evil ; and in order to effect this, he had to enforce severe measures against the apostate monk and his adherents. Luther seemed to the emperor possessed by an evil spirit. "By his writings," the edict says, "Luther spreads bad fruits. He violates the number, order and use of the sacraments ; he stains the indestructible law of marriage ; he covers the pope with shameful and libellous epithets ; he despises the priesthood and induces the laity to wash their hands in the blood of the priests. He denies the liberty of human will and defends a loose and lawless life, as he dared to tear down the sacred bars of morality by publicly burning the ecclesiastical books of canon law. He reviles the ecumenical councils and has called that of Constance, which gave back to the German nation peace and unity, a synagogue of the devil. Like an evil spirit in the habit of a monk, he gathers together old and new heresies, pretending to preach faith, while, under the

motto and pretext of evangelical liberty, he is destroying the true faith and suppressing all good order.”<sup>1</sup>

This is the sincere verdict of the noble Charles V. and of many of the states upon the new doctrine of Martin Luther. Let us now consider Luther’s own opinion of himself and his doctrine, as far as we can deduce it from his familiar conversations and letters.

Especially during his stay in the Castle of Wartburg, anxiety, doubt and remorse of conscience in regard to his new work began to torment him. “It is a dangerous thing,” he says, “to change all spiritual and human order against common sense.”<sup>2</sup> On November 25th, 1521, he wrote to the Augustinians in Wittenberg: “With how much pain and labor did I scarcely justify my conscience that I alone should proceed against the pope, hold him for Antichrist and the bishops for his apostles! How often did my heart punish me and reproach me with this strong argument: ‘Art thou alone wise? Could all the others err and have erred for a long time? How, if thou errest and leadest into error so many people, who would all be damned forever?’”<sup>3</sup> He often tried to rid himself of these anxieties, but they always returned. Even in his old age, a voice within, which he believed to be the voice of the devil, asked him if he were called to preach the Gospel in such a manner “as for many centuries no bishop nor saint had dared to do?”<sup>4</sup> His struggles

<sup>1</sup> Vide Janssen II, 168.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette 2, 2. 10 sq.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette 2, 107.

<sup>4</sup> See *Sämmtliche Werke*, 59, 296; 60, 6. 45.

with the devil, whom he thought he saw in every shape and form, are well known. In his '*Hauspostille*' he says : "The devil sometimes puts on a mask, as I myself have seen ; just as if he were a pig or a burning wisp of straw or something of the kind." He told his friend Myconius that in the Castle of Wartburg the devil came twice to kill him in the form of a dog.<sup>1</sup> In his garden he saw the devil under the appearance of a black wild-boar ; in Coburg, under the form of a star.<sup>2</sup>

Luther was convinced of a contract between witches and Satan, and he declared himself ready to burn witches with his own hand.<sup>3</sup> He confessed that he taught wrong, destroyed the former peaceful condition of the Church, and caused scandal, discord and riots by his doctrine ;<sup>4</sup> and "I cannot deny it," he added ; "I often feel alarmed about it." After having preached for twenty years "he wondered why he could not put any trust in his doctrine, while his disciples believed it."<sup>5</sup>

"Antonius Musa, parish priest at Rochlitz," Matthesius writes, "told me that he once complained heartily to Luther that he could not believe what he preached to others. 'Thanks be to God,' replied Luther, 'that there are other people to whom this happens; I thought I was the only one who felt so.'"<sup>6</sup> Luther tried to convince himself, for consolation in his doubts, that even St. Paul could not

<sup>1</sup> Myconius, Hist. Reform. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Matthesius, Historie 184.

<sup>3</sup> Lauterbach's *Tagebuch*, Dresden 1872. p. 105 and 121.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 46, 226 sq.

<sup>5</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 62, 122..

<sup>6</sup> Matthesius, Hist. 139.

believe his doctrine, and that this was the sting of the flesh of which that Apostle speaks. According to him, St. Paul's words, "I die daily," should be interpreted, "I doubt daily about my doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

Luther's spiritual and physical afflictions, his anxiety and remorse, and his deep struggles with himself are truly heartrending. A certain preacher once told him that the devil had tempted him to kill himself with a knife. "This same thing," replied the reformer, "often happened to me also: that, when I took a knife into my hand, such bad thoughts came to my mind that often I could not pray, and the devil chased me out of the room about it."<sup>2</sup> Luther, like Job, wished that he had never been born, and that he had never appeared with his books.<sup>3</sup> He wrote to Melanchthon: "I am tossed about in the storms and floods of despair and blasphemy."<sup>4</sup>

He sought to quiet the unceasing voice of conscience by ample potations, by joking and amusement, and by putting himself into violent fits of rage.<sup>5</sup> He worked himself into such a passionate and testy humor that he excited the astonishment and horror of his contemporaries. "These are great rascals," he thought, "who say we should not scold the pope."<sup>6</sup> When he could not pray, he would picture to himself the Holy Pontiff; then his heart would burn with anger and hatred, and his prayers

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 60, 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 60, 61.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette 5, 153.

<sup>4</sup> De Wette 3, 189.

<sup>5</sup> De Wette 4, 188.

<sup>6</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 60, 129.

would become fervent.<sup>1</sup> "I cannot pray without cursing." Here is the pious reformer's improvement on the old "Our Father:" "If I would say: 'Hallowed be thy name,' I must say: 'Cursed, damned, destroyed be the names of the papists !' Will I say: 'Thy kingdom come,' I must say: 'Cursed, damned, destroyed be the papacy!' Thus I pray every day without ceasing, orally and in my heart."<sup>2</sup> Everything that excited his anger or was opposed to him ought to be destroyed. He preached a relentless war, not only against the papacy and the diabolical hearts of his adversaries, but also against the Jews; these he covered with all the choice epithets of his own refined vocabulary. His language became so savage and indecent that his contemporary, Pirkheimer, judged him either a madman or one possessed by an evil spirit, and Dantiscus, after visiting him, described him as a demoniac.

Luther's friends begged of him to soften his language and rein in his violence, so as not to excite the people to rebellion and plunge Germany into irreparable misery; but it was all in vain. Zasius wrote to Bonifacius Amerbach : "Luther, in his impudence, twists the whole Sacred Scripture of the Old and New Testament, from the first chapter of Genesis to the end, into menaces and imprecations against the popes, bishops and priests; as if, through all the centuries, God Almighty had no other business than to thunder against priests. Luther's spirit generates enmities, brawls, riots, sects, hatred and

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 60, 107—108

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 25, 108.

murder."<sup>1</sup> Count Hoyer of Mansfield wrote in 1522 to Ulrich of Helfenstein: "I have been all along, as I was at Worms, a good Lutheran; but I have learned that Luther is a blackguard, and as good a drunkard as there is one in Mansfield, delighting to be in the company of beautiful women and to play upon his flute. His conduct is unbecoming, and he seems irretrievably fallen."<sup>2</sup>

The coarseness and vulgarity of Luther's character are clearly displayed in the works which he wrote in the Castle of Wartburg: "On the Abuse of Masses," "Against the Idol of Halle," and "On Monastic Vows." In these inflammatory pamphlets he very brightly calls the pope "the devil's pig;" monks and priests are "the devil's own people and servants, no better than hangmen and murderers." He very flatteringly titles the bishops "unchristian, unlearned monkies, the miracles of God's wrath." In the same elegant language he railed against the seats of learning, the universities, which he called "temples of Moloch and dens of murderers." "From these sinks of iniquity," he said, "proceed the locusts (Apoc. 9) who in all places, spiritually and temporally, govern the whole world; so that even the devil himself could not have invented, for the suppression of the faith and the Gospel, anything stronger than these high schools."

Hoefer in his 'Life of Adrian VI.' remarks very truly of Luther's language: "Nobody can say of this diction that it was used in order to hide thoughts. But the people is to be pitied whom the 'Reformer'

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<sup>1</sup> Rieger, Zasii epist. 72. Ulmae 1744.

<sup>2</sup> Alzog III, 131, note 2.

fed with such language. Luther always remained true to this vulgarity, and the nation visibly grew coarse and rude." "In a few years this barbarity made incredible progress in Germany; and the poison of theological hatred passed, like a sad heritage, from the apartments of the apostate monks to the lower classes of the nation, destroying everything and filling all things with its pest; changing the great, spiritual movement of humanism into a dogmatic contest." Luther had assumed a cynical style which surpassed everything up to his time; and his vulgar language contrasted strongly with the sublimity of the subjects which he treated.

This unrefined language was taken up and used against the reformer himself. He was called a drunkard by his own friends, "*frater, pater, potator,*" and regarded as insane and possessed by an evil spirit. "Luther," said Zwinglius, "was not possessed by one impure spirit, but by a legion of devils." Erasmus described the 'Reformer' as "a boar which devastates the Lord's vineyards." Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England and one of the greatest scholars of the time, calls him "*latrinarius nebulo,*" "*qui nihil in capite concipit praeter stultias, furores, amentias; qui nihil habet in ore praeter latrinas, merdas, stercore.*"

An enemy to every form of true enlightenment and education, Luther was enraged over the fact that the greatest and best part of the German youth was educated at the universities. "Every body thinks," he says, "that in no place under heaven youth can be better instructed than at the universities; so that even monks go thither." "He, who has not at-

tended the high schools, knows nothing ; but he, who has attended them and studied there, knows everything. For one is supposed to learn all divine and human arts in these high schools, and parents are believed to do well in sending their children to them, and thus making them smart and well fitted for the service of God." "This people makes great lords, doctors and masters skilled to govern other peoples ; as we may see with our own eyes, nobody can become a preacher or a pastor unless he be a Master or a Doctor or at least graduate of the high schools." It pained him greatly to see so many attend the high schools and study for the priesthood. "Everybody," he said, speaking of his time, "strove to become a holy priest or a monk. And when the time came for the young man to say his first mass, oh ! how happy did that mother feel who had borne him and given him to the service of God."<sup>1</sup> "There was not a father or a mother, who did not wish their child to become a priest, a monk or a nun. Thus youth and the best of the world went in crowds to the devil."<sup>2</sup> "It was a deplorable misery that a boy was obliged to study for twenty years and longer still, in order to become a priest and to say mass ; and whosoever arrived at this, was happy, and happy was the mother who had borne that child."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 49, 317; 10, 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 52, 241.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 22, 196.

## VIII.

While Luther proposed the Bible as the only source and rule of faith, he undermined its authority by his prefaces to the different books of his version. His translation, as Doellinger very ably shows,<sup>1</sup> is so worded as to fit his own system of belief. He adds and rejects words without the least scruple whenever he finds it advantageous to his new doctrine. About the four gospels he remarks: "The first three speak of our Lord's works rather than of his oral teaching; that of St. John is the only sympathetic, the only true gospel, and should without doubt be preferred to the others. In like manner the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter are superior to the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke."<sup>2</sup> He does not recognize the epistle of St. James as "the writing of an apostle." "Compared with the epistles of St. Paul, this is, in truth, an epistle of straw; it contains absolutely nothing to remind one of the style of the gospel."<sup>3</sup> Nor is he satisfied with the whole of St. Paul's writings; speaking of the Letters to the Hebrews, he says: "It needs not surprise one to find there bits of wood, hay and straw."<sup>4</sup> Of the Apocalypse he writes: "There are many things objectionable in this book. To my mind, it bears

<sup>1</sup> Doellinger's Reformation III, 139—173.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 63, 115.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 63, 115, 156—158.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 63, 154—155.

upon itself no marks of an apostolic or prophetic character. It is not the habit of the apostles to speak in metaphors; on the contrary, when they utter a prophecy, they do so in clear and precise terms. Everyone may form his own judgement of this book; as for myself I feel an aversion to it, and to me this is sufficient reason for rejecting it."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the Bible's authority according to Luther is to be recognized as far only as it agrees with one's "spirit". Chr. I. von Bunsen, a Protestant author, calls Luther's translation of the Bible "the most incorrect, though bearing the marks of a great genius;" "three thousand passages need correction."

Luther was now beyond the pale of the true Church; but without an infallible Church there can be no infallible Bible. "With the Church", says Cardinal Wiseman, "the Holy Scripture is a book of life; without her it may be a book of death". Carl von Bodmann wrote in August 1523: "To what will Luther's principle of explaining the Bible's authority pass? He rejects this book and that as not apostolic, as spurious, as not agreeing with his spirit. Other people reject other books for the same reasons, and finally the whole Bible will be denied and treated like any other profane book. And yet they call it a tyranny unheard of, that the common man is forbidden to read Luther's translation. Already many begin to despise the authority of the Scripture and even faith in the divinity of Christ because they despise the authority of the Church and her teachings. And these sad cases become more frequent the more the Church is insulted in her

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 63, 169—170.

authority, the pope and bishops, by Luther and his followers."

After having done away with the infallible authority of the Church, Luther, like all other heretics, made himself an infallible authority. He wrote to the Prince Elector of Saxony on March 5th, 1522: "I have not received my Gospel from men, but from heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ; so that I desire to be called henceforth an Evangelist!"<sup>1</sup> Cranach, the painter, often represented the reformer as a new saint, and his pictures were sold publicly. Luther calls himself "by the grace of God Ecclesiastes of Wittenberg, who not only has his doctrine from heaven, but is one who has more power in his little finger than a thousand popes, kings, princes and doctors." "Whosoever teaches differently from what I have taught, or whosoever condemns, he condemns God and must remain a child of hell."<sup>2</sup> At an other time he says: "I will not have my doctrine judged by anyone, not even by angels. For as I am convinced of it, I shall be through it your and the angels' judge; so that he, who refuses my doctrine, may not be saved. For it is God's doctrine, and not mine; therefore my judgement is God's, and not my own."<sup>3</sup>

Luther, in a thankless letter, informed his kind patron, the Prince Elector Frederic, that he had left the castle of Wartburg and returned to Wittenberg. "Be it known to your Highness," he says, "that I go to Wittenberg under the protection of a prov-

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 2, 139.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 28, 346.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 28, 144.

idence stronger than that of princes and electors. I have no need of your support, but you have of mine; it will be of advantage to you etc." <sup>1</sup> He arrived in Wittenberg on Good Friday, 1522. Several priests and monks were already applying practically the doctrine which he taught in his pamphlet on "Monastic Vows", and had broken their solemn vows of celibacy. "Good God!" Luther wrote to Spalatinus; "our Wittenbergers will end by giving a wife to every monk; but they shall not do so to me." <sup>2</sup>

While Luther was absent from Wittenberg, his disciples, being excited by Carlstadt, caused great havoc in that city. Carlstadt, at the head of an infuriated mob, had broken into the churches, demolishing altars and sacred vessels and destroying the paintings and other works of art. Luther condemned this vandalism in a letter which he wrote from the Wartburg. "I condemn images," he says, "but I desire to attack them with preaching and not with flames." (*Nicholas Hansmann, March 17th, 1522.*) Staupitz showed Carlstadt this letter, but that Vandal replied: "Be silent; do you then forget that Luther has written: 'The Lord's word is not a word of peace, but a sword'?" <sup>3</sup> Erasmus also protested against Carlstadt's barbarity. "Whoever deprives us of painting", he says, "deprives existence of its greatest charms; painting is often a better interpreter than language." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, Vol. II, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 2, 40.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, I, 420.

<sup>4</sup> *Epistolae, Lib. 31, Ep. 59.*

## IX.

Immediately after his arrival in Wittenberg Luther began to preach on "misunderstanding christian liberty" or began, as he characteristically expressed himself, "to rap these visionaries on the snout." Shocked at the atrocious conduct of his brother reformers, he exclaimed: "what is the meaning of these novelties which have been introduced in my absence? Was I at such a distance that I could not be consulted? Am I no longer the principle of the pure word? I have preached it; I have printed it; and I have done more harm to the papacy, while sleeping or drinking Wittenberg beer with Philip and Amsdorf, than all the princes and emperors together."<sup>1</sup> He regarded this fine play, begun by the devil through Carlstadt and the new prophets, as a just punishment for his own humble conduct before the emperor at the Diet of Worms. He now called the emperor a tyrant. He no longer contented himself with declaiming against the papacy; he railed at secular princes also. He especially hated Duke George of Saxony, who, in accordance with the edict of Worms, was trying to quell the new doctrine and its followers. "Should the princes continue to listen to the stupid brains of Duke George", he says, "then, I fear, an insurrection is before the door." This duke "imagines that he eats

<sup>1</sup> See *Sämmtliche Werke*, 28, 204 -285.

Christ as a wolf swallows a fly". The princes should know that "the sword of civil war is suspended above their heads", and it seemed to him as if he saw "Germany swimming in blood".<sup>1</sup>

In July, 1522, he published his pamphlet, "Against the Falsely Called Ecclesiastical State of Pope and Bishops." In this pamphlet he boldly demanded the expulsion of the bishops, denouncing them as wolves, donkies, tyrants and apostles of Antichrist. In addition to this, he printed a "Bull of the Reformation," in which he majestically declares: "All who assist, and risk their bodies, goods and honor in the destruction of bishoprics and the regimen of bishops, are the dear children of God, and true Christians; and they keep the commandment of God and fight against the order of the devil. But all who are obedient to the bishops, are the devil's own servants, and fight against the order and law of God." In concluding, the "Pope of Wittenberg" says: "This is my, Doctor Luther's, bull; which giveth as a reward God's grace to all who keep it and follow it. Amen!"<sup>2</sup>

Leo X. departed from this life on Dec. 1st, 1521. He was succeeded by Adrian VI., an humble, but learned and holy priest, who had formerly been preceptor of Charles V. Adrian, earnestly desiring to end the religious confusion in Germany, sent Chieregati, Bishop of Teramo, to Nürnberg as his legate. The States had assembled in diet in Nov., 1522. The nuncio emphatically demanded the execution of the edict of Worms, and urged the States to take

<sup>1</sup> De Wette 2, 157—158.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 28, 142—201.

vigorous measures against the apostate monk. He foretold that "the revolt, now directed against the spiritual authority, would shortly deal a blow against temporal also." His entreaties, however, missed their effect, on account of the weakness and luke-warmness of the States, and their growing disrespect to papal authority. But they promised to prevent, as far as possible, the spreading of the new doctrine until the convocation of a council. They, moreover, issued an exhortation, which was to be read to the people, every Sunday, from the pulpits, "to invoke God humbly, and to ask him that he may take away that error, which is now rising and growing everywhere, from all Christian authorities, spiritual and temporal, and from other Christian people; and that he may grant the grace that all may live, keep and remain in the unity of holy Christian faith, and thus obtain the way of eternal happiness."<sup>1</sup>

Luther continued to spurn all authority and professed a desire to live "under the Turks rather than under the Papists." Enraged against those princes who opposed his new doctrine and the sale of his books, he furiously attacked them in his libel, "The Secular Magistracy." Here are a few choice extracts from this work: "God Almighty has made our princes mad; so that they imagine they can act and command their subjects as they please.—These blackguards, who now wish to be called Christian Princes.—God delivers the princes to their reprobate senses; they wish even to govern souls, and thus they bring upon themselves God's and all

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<sup>1</sup> In the Archives of Frankfurt.

people's hatred, and in this way they perish with the bishops, priests and monks ; one rascal with the other.—Since the beginning of the world a wise and prudent prince has been a rare bird upon earth, but rarer still a prince (who was) a good man. They commonly are the greatest fools and rascals upon earth, of whom we need expect but little good. They are the lictors and hangmen of God, whom his divine wrath employs to punish the wicked and keep exterior peace. A great lord is our God ; therefore he needs, must have such noble, high-born, wealthy executioners and policemen.—The people, wearied of your tyranny and iniquity, can no longer bear it. God wills it not. The world is no longer what it was, when you could hunt men as you could deer.”<sup>1</sup>

In May, 1523, when Adrian VI. canonized Benno, Bishop of Misnia, Luther published his pamphlet, “Against the New Idol and the Old Devil,” in which, among other things, he said : “The living Satan permits himself to be worshipped under the name of Benno.” He calls the pope “an impious hypocrite, the determined enemy of God’s Word, who kills the living saints of the Lord, and canonizes the slave of Rome or rather the devil himself.<sup>2</sup> No wonder that the learned Erasmus exclaimed at this savage production: “Who can convince me that those are guided by the spirit of Christ, whose manners are so opposed to the doctrines of Christ ! Formerly the Gospel made the fierce mild, the spoiler merciful, the turbulent peaceful, the slanderer charitable ;

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 22, 59-105.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 24, 237-257.

but these (evangelists) excite fury, take by fraud the property of others, create disturbances everywhere, and speak evil of the good and just. I see new hypocrites, new tyrants ; but not a mite of the spirit of the Gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

Diet of Nürnberg promised to sustain, in their action, those bishops who should punish married ecclesiastics and religious who left their monasteries or convents with canonical penalties. But Luther, despising all human and divine authority, advised the knights of the Teutonic Order to break their vows, divide the property of the order between them and take wives. He advanced the following startling piece of information as his only argument: “It is much better to live in concubinage than in chastity; the latter is an unpardonable sin ; the former, by God’s aid, will not infer the loss of salvation.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, the pure “Reformer” thought it impossible for poor human nature to observe chastity.<sup>3</sup> His sermon on marriage is so filthy and obscene that it would bring a blush to the brow of a Pagan ; we therefore pass it in silence. Marriage, according to him, is but a mere ceremony, which “no vice or sin could prevent.”<sup>4</sup> He even went so far as to write in January, 1524: “Indeed I confess that I cannot prevent polygamy, as it is not against the Holy Scripture ; but there are many things permissible which, in order to avoid scandal, ought not becomingly to be done among Christians.”<sup>5</sup> “From this

<sup>1</sup> Erasmi Epist. 69, *ad Melancht.* p. 726.

<sup>2</sup> Ulenberg, *Hist. de vita Lutheri*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette 2, 372.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 20, 60–73.

<sup>5</sup> De Wette 2, 459.

immoral teaching," wrote Emser in 1524, "one can easily conclude that Luther is no true Ecclesiastes or Prophet; but rather one of those of whom Christ says: 'Beware of false prophets'."

One of the most clearly marked consequences of the "new doctrine" is the decline of the spirit of charity and mercy. The Church teaches that by good works man can show practically his faith in Christ and can gather merits for eternity. A firm belief in this doctrine was the cause of very many pious donations and legacies to hospitals, orphanages and other charitable institutions. A firm belief in this doctrine built up magnificent cathedrals and churches, and adorned them with those matchless works of art which even in our days of materialism call out the admiration and astonishment of the coarse Luther's polished friends. A firm faith in this doctrine founded the universities and monastic schools and enabled them to teach everything which at that time was known to men. But the new doctrine on justification by faith alone taught that good works were altogether unnecessary; and consequently, almsgiving and the generous charity which had prompted it became things of the past.

Luther himself praised the generosity by which people were wont to be actuated in the old days of the papacy: "Then it snowed down alms, donations and legacies; but under the evangelicals nobody gives a penny."<sup>1</sup> "Under the papacy the people were generous and gave willingly; but now, under the Gospel, nobody gives anything, but one oppresses the other and each one desires to possess everything.

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 43,164.

And the longer the Gospel is preached, the more deeply are people drowned in avarice, pride and pomp.”<sup>1</sup> “Under the papacy everybody was kind and generous; they gave cheerfully with both hands and with great piety. But now, though they ought to show themselves thankful for the Holy Gospel, nobody wants to give, but only to take.”<sup>2</sup> They have learned nothing now but to oppress, rob, steal and commit all kinds of fraud.” “Tell me,” the Doctor asks, “what city is so strong or so pious as to collect enough to support a schoolmaster or a pastor? If we had not the charitable alms and donations of our ancestors, the Gospel would be destroyed in city and country, and no poor preacher could be supported.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 5, 264—265.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 13, 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 14, 389—390.

## X.

In the absence of Charles V, the States had again assembled in Nürnberg in November, 1524. Campeggio, the legate of Clement VII, urged them, in the name of the Holy Father, to take decisive measures against the new doctrine; but they showed themselves once more weak and slothful. They absurdly demanded a council at the next Diet in Spire, at which even the laity should have the right of reconsidering the doctrines which the Holy See had publicly condemned. At the same time they promised to do whatever they could toward enforcing the edict of Worms and protecting the faith of the Catholic Church.

This action of the States was entirely disapproved of by both the pope and the emperor. On the other hand, it drove Luther into a frantic fit of madness and, as usual, he gave vent to his feelings by a new literary production. In this he attacked furiously both the emperor and the princes. "It sounds shamefully," he writes, "to hear emperor and princes tell public lies, and still more shamefully to perceive them issuing at the same time contradictory decrees, proscribing me by the edict of Worms on the one hand and on the other appointing a Diet at Spire to examine what is good or evil in my books. Thus I am condemned and at the same time reserved to be condemned. The Germans shall regard and per-

secute me as one already condemned, and yet will wait until I shall be condemned. These princes must be drunken and mad! Well, we Germans must remain Germans, asses and victims of the pope, although we are, 'ground in a mortar like chaff', as Solomon says. I perceive that God does not wish me to deal with rational beings; he delivers me to German brutes, as to wolves and boars. God is too wise for you; he has made you fools. God is powerful; he will crush you."<sup>1</sup>

He even warned and besought the people not to assist their princes against the hereditary foes of Christianity and civilization, the Turks, who were at that time threatening to devastate the Christian world: "I ask you all, dear Christians, not to pray to God for these blind princes, of whom he makes use to chastise us in his great wrath. Beware of giving your alms and assistance against the Turks, who are a thousand times more wise and pious than our princes." Then he goes on to insult the emperor: "This worm of earth, who is not sure of an hour of life, who is not ashamed to proclaim himself the high and mighty defender of faith. God help us, how mad is the world! The king of England also calls himself 'the Defender of Faith and the Christian Church' and the Hungarians sing in their litany: 'O Lord, hear us, thy defenders!' (On account of) these things I complain to all pious Christians to join with me in pitying such mad, stupid, raging, furious fools! Better far to die ten times than to listen to such blasphemies against the majesty of Heaven. Yes, it is their deserved reward to per-

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 24, 211 sequ.

secute the Word of God ; therefore they are punished with blindness. May God deliver us from them and give us in his mercy other masters ! Amen !”<sup>1</sup>

“Can such a one,” asks a contemporary, “who writes thus and represents the emperor and princes as obdurate fools and idiots, deny that he excites the people against their lawful authority ?”<sup>2</sup>

Luther taught that every community has the right to judge all its doctrine and to appoint and depose its pastors. Commenting on the words of Christ, “ Beware of false prophets,” he drew the following very logical conclusion : There can be no false prophet among the hearers, but only among the preachers ; therefore all preachers must and should be subject to the judgement of the hearers in regard to their doctrine. In another place he says : “ An individual Christian has so much power that even without the calling he may rise and teach if the preacher be absent. Bishops, however, and other spiritual superiors, who sit in the devil’s place and are wolves, have as much right to preaching and the care of souls among Christians as the Turks and Jews. They had better drive asses and dogs. They are tyrants and rascals, who treat us as the devil’s apostles would do.”<sup>3</sup>

According to this principle of Luther’s everyone could judge what was true doctrine and what false, and everybody had the right, whenever he felt inspired, of rising up from his place and teaching his less favored brethren. Thomas Münzer saw this

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 24, 236–237.

<sup>2</sup> Gloss. & Comment. Strasburg, 1524. Sec. Bl. M1.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 22, 140–151.

clearly. Thomas Münzer was a disciple of Luther and one of the earliest 'reformers.' He listened faithfully to the Evangelist of Wittenberg, and after one of his sermons came to the conclusion that Luther's doctrine was entirely false; and that he himself had been forced down from heaven for the purpose of preaching to benighted mortals the Word of God in all its purity. Accordingly he immediately corresponded with his vocation and began to preach. In his sermons he complimented Luther with having "confessed Christendom with a false faith," and called him "an Archdevil who without any sense makes God the cause of evil."<sup>1</sup> He opposed Luther's doctrinal views, but agreed with him in rejecting the authority of the Church and all exterior revelation. Man, according to him, does not receive divine revelation through the Church nor through preaching nor even through the Bible, but through the Spirit of God who speaks to him directly. His sermons tended towards supporting a mystical communism, "far more comprehensible to the illiterate peasantry," says Alzog, "than the religious equality and freedom advocated by Luther."

Carlstadt, Luther's old professor, had also chosen a path for himself and was preaching a doctrine entirely different from that of his pupil. Luther vainly endeavored "to bring Carlstadt to a Christian sense", and they met in the Black Boar Inn at Jena, in the presence of a great many spectators. At this venerable Council of the fathers they called each other liars and reproached each other with vanity

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<sup>1</sup> Janssen II, 368.

and pride. "Luther", said Carlstadt, "preaches the Gospel falsely and is continually contradicting himself". At the close of the disputation Carlstadt exclaimed: "If what Luther said be true, God grant that the devil may tear me to pieces before you!"

A certain shoemaker, who had been reading the Bible, also tried to convince the "Reformer" that he was in error. During this memorable controversy both parties became so excited and lost control of themselves so completely, that Luther rejoiced exceedingly when he had left the city far behind him. "I was glad", he wrote, "that they did not throw stones and mud at me, as several of them gave me the following blessing: 'Go away in a thousand devils' names! May you break your neck before you get out of the city!'"<sup>1</sup> The enlightenment which he had taken so many pains to sow among the people, was already sending forth its fruit.

Luther published about this time a pamphlet "Against the Heavenly Prophets", in which he defended his teaching against Carlstadt, Münzer and others. If we may judge from the tone of this book, the Protestant author, Lange, spoke truly when he said: "Luther's imperious nature would allow no one else to have his own way".

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<sup>1</sup> De Wette 2, 575.

## XI.

Erasmus, the greatest scholar of that age, had at first sympathized with Luther, as he expected that the Reformer's movement would tend towards correcting certain abuses in the Church's discipline ; and Luther, on his part, had endeavored by flattery to secure the friendship of Erasmus, whom he called the "glory and hope of Germany." But when Erasmus perceived that Luther's teachings, instead of reforming, produced confusion and disorder and threatened to undermine society itself, he grew alarmed, and directed against the Doctor his book on "Free Will." "Luther replied immediately with a pamphlet on "Slave Will."<sup>1</sup> In this he openly professes a fatalistic doctrine which seems to bring into Christianity the extravagant "Kismet" of the Koran. "The almighty power," he says, "and the eternal providence destroy all free will. Even our reason must confess that there is no free will either in God or in man." Professing a Persian Dualism,—good and evil principles contending for the possession of man,—he continues: "Does God leap into the saddle? The horse is obedient and accommodates itself to every movement of the rider, and goes whither he wills it. Does God throw down the reins? Then Satan leaps upon the back of the animal, which bends, moves forward and submits to

<sup>1</sup> *De servo arbitrio* in *Op. lat.* 7, 113 seq.

the spurs and caprices of its new rider. The will cannot choose its rider and cannot kick against the spur that pricks it. It must get on, and its very docility is a disobedience or a sin. The only struggle possible is between the two riders, God and the devil, who dispute the momentary possession of the steed. And then is fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist: 'I am become like a beast of burden.' Let the Christian, then, know that God foresees nothing contingently; but that he foresees, proposes and acts from his eternal and immutable will. This is the thunderbolt that shatters and destroys free will. Hence it comes to pass that whatever happens, happens according to the irreversible decrees of God. Therefore necessity, not free will, is the controlling principle of our conduct. God is the author of what is evil in us, as well as of what is good; and, as he bestows happiness on those who merit it not, so also does he damn others who do not deserve their fate."

Since the year 1524 a host of reformers had passed through the southwest of Germany and through Switzerland. Each one of these followed Luther's example in claiming a heavenly mission and in proving his new doctrine by texts from the Bible. Some of them gave practical interpretations to different passages of the Scriptures, which were singular and wild in the extreme. We shall quote a few curious cases as examples of this:<sup>1</sup>

In St. Gall a number of men suddenly awoke to the significance of the divine precept, "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel". Accordingly they met in the town, and by mutual agreement

<sup>1</sup> See references in Janssen's History II, 386.

rushed through the city-gates toward the four quarters of the earth. In Appenzell twelve thousand persons assembled according to the text : "Do not care of what you shall eat" and abstained from food until hunger compelled them to disperse. Some climbed upon the roofs of houses and preached from these exalted stations because Christ had said : "That which you hear in the ear, preach ye upon the house-tops". Others again threw the Bible into the fire according to their interpretation of the divine word : "The letter killeth ; the spirit vivifieth."

This general confusion and religious anarchy, the natural consequence of Luther's doctrine on private judgement, was a severe trial to the reformer himself. In a letter which he addressed to the Christians of Antwerp, he made the following confession : "One rejects baptism ; another the Eucharist ; another constructs a new world between the present and that which will arise after the last judgement ; some deny the divinity of Christ. One says this ; the other that ; there are as many sects as there are heads. Every booby imagines himself inspired by the Holy Ghost and wants to be a prophet."<sup>1</sup> He also complained of the growing demoralization and brutality which existed among those people who had received the new doctrine : "Our Evangelicals are seven times worse than they were before. For since we have learned the Gospel, we steal, tell lies, deceive, gormandize, tipple and commit all kinds of vice." He found himself in 1523 "living in the midst of Sodom, Gomorrha and Babylon".<sup>2</sup> "I remember",

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 3,61.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtl. Werke*, 28,420; 36,4ii. 300.

he says again, "that when I was young, the majority of people, even of the rich folks, drank but water and were content with coarse food ; some hardly touched wine even after the age of thirty. But now they accustom the very children to drink wine, and not of a bad and weaker kind, but strong and foreign wines, even distilled liquors, which they sip in the morning before breakfast." On another occasion he remarks : "Drunkenness is now a common habit not only of the rough, illiterate mob and the peasants in villages and open taverns, but even of the nobility and the sons of noblemen in cities."<sup>1</sup>

Erasmus, also, complained of the growing immorality and lawlessness which were evidently the fruits of the new doctrine. He wrote to Luther in 1524: "These innovations produce many corrupt and rebellious people, and I fear a bloody insurrection".<sup>2</sup> But Luther continued to excite the people to open rebellion. "A common destruction of all monasteries and convents", he said,<sup>3</sup> "would be the best reformation, because they are useless and one could do without them. It would be well to destroy all churches in the whole world and to preach, pray and baptize in the open air". In a New-Year's sermon he informed his audience that priests and monks were the worst people on earth, —worse than the Turks.<sup>4</sup> In those times the pope was represented as an ass, and the monk as a calf, not only in oral and written addresses, but also in pictorial representations. Luther wished to undermine all spiritual authority.

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 8, 293—297 ; 18, 350 ; 20, 273. <sup>2</sup> Doellinger, Reformation I, 6—18. <sup>3</sup> See *Sämmtliche Werke*, 7, 121, 131. 222. 223. 330. <sup>4</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 16, 33.

## XII.

The peasants were at this time in a wretched and impoverished condition. Boettinger, in his History of Germany, says: "The temporal or spiritual lord treated his peasantry like slaves. They were subject to him in soul as well as in body. If he changed his religion, the vassal was obliged to adopt that of his master without a murmur". It is not, therefore, surprising that the peasantry received with joy Luther's works on "Christian Liberty" and "Secular Magistracy", which did away with all authority and exhorted a revolt. They hailed Luther as their deliverer from a heavy and irksome yoke.

"The peasantry", Alzog says, "inflamed by the fanatical teachings and fiery appeals of the sectaries, rather than driven to excess by the tyranny and extortions of feudal lords, rose in open and organized rebellion. In a manifesto, consisting of twelve articles based upon texts drawn from the writings of Luther, the peasants claimed first of all the right of appointing and removing at will the ministers of the Gospel ..... The peasants, assembling in large bodies, would proceed to plunder and burn convents, demolish the strongholds of the nobility and commit every sort of outrage and atrocity".

The author of a controversial work, published in 1532, says very truly: "Luther first sounded the tocsin; he cannot clear himself from the rebellion,

although he wrote that the common folks should not use force without the magistracy. The common people do not hear that ; but they observe whatever part of Luther's sermons and writing they please."<sup>1</sup> Zasius wrote to his friend Amerbach in 1525 : "Luther, this pest of peace, this most pernicious of all two-legged beings, has plunged the whole of Germany into such a fury, that one must regard it as a sort of security if he be not killed at once."<sup>2</sup>

The peasants tried to justify their cruel and vandalic destruction of life and property by appealing to the Gospel as interpreted by Luther's doctrine ; and they claimed to be the most zealous defenders of this. But the Wittenberg monk, not being particularly desirous of shining as the instigator of such a riotous revolt, printed a reply to their manifesto.<sup>3</sup> In this he attempted to cast the disgrace of having caused the rebellion upon his enemies, whom he styled "the prophets of murder."

At this time he sincerely wished to crush the insurrection, but his writings against it only added fuel to the fire. He accused the bishops and priests of having caused it, and threatened them with God's wrath because they were blind to the light of his Gospel. He advised the princes to deal mildly with the rebels. "It is true," he said, "that the princes who oppose the preaching of the gospel and oppress the people, deserve dethronement." At the same time he requested the peasants not to use the name of Christianity as "a cover for their impatient, un-

<sup>1</sup> *Contra M. Lutherum*, Fol. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Stintzing. Ulrich Zasius, Basel, 1857. See 263-267.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 24, 257-286.

peaceable, unchristian conduct." "No more tithes! you exclaim," he says; "by what right do you take them from their lawful possessors? It is to convert them to charitable purposes. But ought you to be so liberal with what is not your own? You wish to free yourselves from slavery; but slavery is as old as the world. The abolition of slavery would be directly against the Gospel."<sup>1</sup> Thus he flattered and deluded the poor peasants whom he himself had seduced into open rebellion.

"When Luther," writes Osiander,<sup>2</sup> "saw the peasants attacking not only the bishops and clergy, but also his teaching and the princes, he preached the slaughter of the rebels like that of wild beasts." Erasmus in his 'Hyperaspistes' addresses the reformer in this way: "It is no account that in your cruel manifesto against the peasants you repudiate all ideas of rebellion; your books, written in German, are at hand, wherein you preached against the bishops and monks and thus gave occasion to these tumults."

In the meantime the peasants continued in their rage and fury. They devastated thousands of churches and burned down innumerable monasteries and seats of learning. They destroyed libraries and manuscripts which had been for centuries the pride of scholars, and the memorials of industrious monks. Mutian, the humanist, in a letter which he wrote to the Elector of Saxony on Apr. 27th, 1525, gives a sad description of the outrages which were being daily perpetrated. "My Lord and King," he writes,

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, l. c.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 103.

"my soul is sad unto death. Violently, cruelly and inhumanly the rough troop of peasants destroys and devastates God's temples without fearing the Almighty. It is pitiful to see so many nuns and monks roving about without shelter or support, driven away from their sacred dwellings by sacrilegious bands. Miserable and in want, I am forced to beg my bread in my old age."<sup>1</sup>

Luther now saw clearly the progresss of the rebellion and the enormity of the crimes which were being committed under the sanction of his new Gospel. He at once changed the tone of his writings, and became from a liberator of the oppressed an apostle of despotism, the most cruel and satanic adviser of the princes against the peasantry. His book against "those pillaging and murdering peasants" is so rabid and bitter that it seems the work of a demon rather than that of a man. He calls the peasants "faithless, treacherous, lying, disobedient boobies and rascals," who have deserved the death of soul and body. A rebel is under the ban of God and the emperor, and "he, who strangles him first, does right well." "Strike! slay front and rear! For nothing is more poisonous, pernicious, develish than a rebel. It is a mad dog that bites you if you do not destroy it." Every magistracy, that does not punish "with murder and bloodshed," is guilty of all murders and evils committed; there can be "no place for patience and mercy;" "it is the time of the sword and wrath, and not the time of grace." "The peasants have bad conciences and are defending a wrong cause; and every peasant killed

<sup>1</sup> Tetzel, *Suppl. epp. Mutiani* 75-78. Jenae 1701.

for it is lost, soul and body, and is the devil's own forever. So wondrous are the times now that a prince can win heaven with blood more easily than others can with prayer." "Prick! Strike! Strangle, whosoever is able to! Well for thee, if thou shouldst die doing so; for a happier death thou couldst not obtain."<sup>1</sup>

Luther's writings at this time aroused the indignation even of his disciples. Some of them maintained that, as the spirit had once left Saul, so it had departed from their master.<sup>2</sup> But Luther excused his ferocious bitterness by saying that he was commanded directly by God to write as he had written, and reproached his accusers with making common cause with the rebels. He wrote to Caspar Müller, the chancellor of Mansfield: "Those, who chide my little book, should keep their mouths closed and be careful, for they are surely rebellious in their hearts. For he, who sides with the rebellious, gives us sufficiently to understand that if he had time and space, he would do evil just as he has resolved it in his heart. A rebel does not deserve to be treated with reason; we must answer him with the fist till his nose bleeds and his head flies in the air. The peasants would not hear me; we must open their ears by means of the musket. To the one who calls me unkind and unmerciful, I answer this: merciful or unmerciful, we are now speaking about God's Word, which demands the honor of the king and the destruction of the rebel." "What I teach and write," he added, "shall remain although the

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 24, 288-294.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 2, 67.

whole world should burst."<sup>1</sup> The Reformer afterwards boasted that he was the cause of all the blood shed in the peasants' war: "I, Martin Luther, have slain all the peasants in the insurrection because I commanded them to be killed; their blood is upon my head. But I put it upon the Lord God, by whose command I spoke."<sup>2</sup>

"A wise man," wrote Luther to John Röhel, "gives to the ass food, a pack-saddle and the whip; to the peasant oat-straw. If they are not content, give them the cudgel and the carbine; it is their due. Let us pray that they may be obedient; if not, show them no mercy. Make the musket whistle among them, or else they will be a thousand times more wicked."<sup>3</sup> The armies of the German princes followed these instructions with the most merciless activity. The battle of Frankenhausen was fought on May 15th, 1525, and the peasant forces were literally annihilated.

Germany at this time presented a most dismal appearance, especially in those districts where the war had raged. Over one thousand convents and castles lay in ashes: hundreds of hamlets had been burned to the ground; the fields were uncultivated, the ploughing utensils stolen, the cattle slaughtered or carried away. The widows and orphans of more than one hundred and fifty thousand<sup>4</sup> slain peasants were living in the deepest misery. The vestiges of this wholesale devastation may be seen in Ger-

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, 24, 295-319.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, 59, 284-285.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 2, 669.

<sup>4</sup> Geissel, Kaiserdom. Cöln 1876, p. 315, Note 1.

many even to this day. "We are now gathering the fruits of your preaching," Erasmus wrote to Luther. "You disclaim any connection with the insurgents, while they regard you as the author and expounder of their principles. It is well known that persons, who have God's Word constantly in their mouth, have stirred up the most frightful insurrections."<sup>1</sup>

Luther at this time needed the protection of the princes very badly, for naturally he was execrated by the people whom he had so shamefully deceived. He sought to obtain this protection by flattering them and preaching the blindest obedience to their commands. "The Scripture," he wrote in 1526, "calls magistrates by a parable executioners, drivers, solicitors. As drivers of asses have to urge them on and compel them with the lash, so magistrates in order to check the people must goad, beat, strangle, hang, burn, behead and mutilate them."<sup>2</sup> This spirit of servility and depotism grew stronger in him as his years increased. In 1527 he went so far as to advocate slavery as it once existed among the Jews. He did not believe at all in the efficacy of moral persuasion: "Nobody can check the people except by the constraint of an exterior regimen."<sup>3</sup>

"I am angry," he wrote in 1529, "with the peasants, 'who wish to govern themselves and fail to realize their happiness in dwelling peacefully under the protection of the princes. Oh ! ye powerless, rude peasants and asses, who will not perceive it ! May the thunder strike you dead !'"<sup>4</sup> Henry of

<sup>1</sup> *Erasmi Hyperaspistes*, I, 1032.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 15, 276.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 33, 389.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 36, 175.

Einsiedel, a nobleman whose conscience was troubled about the many socages by which his serfs were oppressed, once asked counsel in the matter from Luther. He received the following reply: "To do service in socage is a penalty imposed upon people for crimes committed; no one should have scruples about it. It would not be good to drop and abolish the right of doing service in socage; because the common man must be laden with burden, or else he becomes petulant."<sup>1</sup> Scherr, a great enemy of the Catholic Church, called Luther the real inventor of the doctrine of blind and unconditional obedience to magistrates. The reformer preached: "Your reason tells you that two and five make seven; but should the magistrates say that two and five make eight, you would have to believe it against your knowledge and reason." This slavish doctrine naturally was very acceptable to many of the German princes.

Bensen, a Protestant author, remarks very truly: "While the Catholic Church has never, at least in theory, sanctioned the oppression practised by prelates and nobles and has ever defended, sometimes successfully but always obstinately, the right of individuals and nations against even emperors themselves; the evangelical reformers are justly reproached with having been the first to teach and preach to the Germans the doctrine of servile submission and the right of the stronger". These words find an illustration even at the present day in Protestant Prussia under Pope William I. and Cardinal von Bismarck.

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<sup>1</sup> Kapp, *Nachlese*, 1, 281.

### XIII.

"Luther celebrated the funeral of the slain peasants by marrying a nun".<sup>1</sup> He wrote to Röhel on June 15th, 1525: "To make the mad and stupid peasants still more mad and stupid I got married". Another end which he had in view when he took this sacrilegious step was, as he says himself, "to encourage the Cardinal Elector of Mentz, who could hardly hesitate to follow so illustrious an example". His chosen one was Catharine Bora, a nun of the Nimptschen convent who had been carried off from the cloister by a young citizen of Torgau named Bernard Koppe. The marriage was celebrated secretly on June 13th, 1525. Eighteen years before the pious "Reformer" had of his own free will solemnly promised in the convent chapel at Erfurt to observe perpetual chastity in order to devote himself unreservedly to God.

The marriage was so sudden and so little expected by his friends, that they were greatly surprised and disquieted by it. But Luther blasphemously called it the result of a divine inspiration: "The Lord has suddenly and wonderfully thrown (*conjecit*) me into marriage with that nun, Catharine Bora."<sup>2</sup> He seemed to feel the depth and extent of his sacrilege even at the time of the ceremony; for only three

<sup>1</sup> Osiander, Cent. 104, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 3, 1.

days afterwards he wrote to Spalatinus : " By this marriage I have made myself so vile and contemptible, as to make all the devils laugh and all the angels weep ".<sup>1</sup> Justus Jonas, a friend of Luther, wrote about this time to Spalatinus : " Our Luther has married Catharina Bora. Yesterday I was present at the marriage. I could not refrain from tears at the sight ; I do not know why ".<sup>2</sup>

Luther's enemies, however, far from shedding tears, had a hearty laugh at his expense, and thus verified the prophetic words of Erasmus : " If ever this monk takes a wife, the whole world and the devil himself will laugh ". Luther's choice was hardly a happy one. Catharine's disposition was very disagreeable. She was haughty and imperious in the extreme and gave her husband much vexation and trouble.

Erasmus in a letter about that time expressed the feelings of a great many evangelicals. " It was thought," he says, " that Luther was the hero of a tragedy ; but, for my own part, I regard him as playing the chief part in a comedy, which has ended, as every comedy ends, in a marriage ".<sup>3</sup>

Henry VIII of England did not join in the laughter of his contemporaries, but hurled at the married monk a storm of invective : " You may well be ashamed to raise your eyes to me. But I wonder how you can raise your eyes to God or look at any honest man, when you, an Augustinian monk, at the instigation of the devil, the suggestions of the flesh and the emptiness of your own understanding

<sup>1</sup> Seck Lib., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Spalatini, Ann., Menken, 2, 645.

<sup>3</sup> Alzog's History.

have not been ashamed to violate, with your sacrilegious embraces, a virgin devoted to the Lord. Such an act in Pagan Rome would have caused the vestal to be buried alive and you to be stoned to death. But this is a greater offence. You have contracted an incestuous marriage with this nun, whom you parade publicly to the confusion of morality, in contempt of the holy laws of marriage and those vows of continence at which you laugh with so much effrontery. Abomination! When you ought to be sinking with shame and endeavoring to make reparation, you, wretched man, glory in your crime and, instead of asking pardon, carry your head high and excite other monks to imitate your infamous conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Audin’s Life of Luther, II, 229.

## XIV.

Henry VIII was one of Luther's most important and most fearless adversaries. Assisted by John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and other learned prelates, he wrote his book, "Defense of the Seven Sacraments Against Doctor Martin Luther," in which he skillfully refuted the Reformer's new doctrines on confession, indulgences, the papacy, etc. and dexterously exposed the numerous contradictions in his writings. By this work the English king obtained from Rome the title of Defender of the Faith, (*Defensor Fidei*), — a title to which Queen Victoria still clings with pride. Luther answered in his usual vulgar and indecent style, vomiting forth all the vile epithets he could find. He called the king "a crowned ass, a liar, a varlet, an idiot, a swine of the Thomist herd."

"Thou art a blasphemer," he exclaimed, "not a king. Thou hast a royal jawbone, nothing more; Henry, thou art a fool." Again he said: "It is the work of God, who blinds him so that through me his rascality may be shown up."<sup>1</sup> This abusive language imbibed Henry so intensely, that he used even his political influence against the apostate monk.

The hypocrisy of which Luther was capable is nowhere more plainly evident than in his dealings with Henry VIII. While he had nothing to gain

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 28, 343.

from that monarch, he treated him with the utmost independence and contempt. But afterwards, when Henry was about to separate himself from the Church for the sake of a woman, Luther saw the advantages he might reap by securing so important a convert to his new Gospel, and immediately became a most abject and servile flatterer. "I should indeed fear to address Your Majesty," he wrote to the king, "when I remember how I insulted you in the pamphlet which I, a proud and vain man, yielding to evil advisers and not to my own inclination, published against you. I hardly dare lift my eyes to you; I, a worm of dust and rottenness deserving merely contempt and disdain, who have not feared to insult so great a prince. Humbly prostrate at your feet, I pray and beseech you to pardon my offences etc. etc."<sup>1</sup> In this affair Luther had miscalculated. The letter, which he thought would be an acceptable peace-offering to the angry king, became one of the deepest disgraces of his disgraceful life; for Henry exposed the Reformer's duplicity and covered him with the scorn and derision of the learned world.

Luther, never weary of writing, published on New-Year's Day, 1526, another very passionate libel against pope, bishops and priests. He called them "the locusts, caterpillars, bugs and pernicious worms that devour and corrupt the whole country". One should not cease to ridicule and abuse the papacy and the clergy until they be entirely destroyed. In prose and in poetry, in music and in painting the devilish existence of this idolatry

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, vol. III.

should be attacked. "Unhappy", he exclaimed, "is he who is slothful in this, as he knows that he renders a service to God when he has resolved and begun to crush this horror and turn it into dust".<sup>1</sup> In the same year he said of those that were true to the old faith: "Nobody can be a papist if he be not at least a murderer, a robber and a persecutor".<sup>2</sup> In this way he tried to rekindle against the old Church the expiring fervor of his disciples.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 29, 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 65.

## XV.

After having abolished all episcopal jurisdiction, Luther saw clearly that his new church needed some organization. He therefore placed the administration of its affairs into the hands of the princes and laity. Only with the assistance of the civil power could the 'Gospel' strike root in a country once so thoroughly religious. The princes, who took an active part in the reform movement, became defenders of the Gospel through pecuniary motives, as the Reformer himself bears witness: "Many are Evangelicals because there are still Catholic remonstrances and church-property".<sup>1</sup> Besides, to wanton princes, whose private lives would not bear the light of day, the easy doctrine of Wittenberg was much better suited than the stern teaching of the Crucified.

Luther was at this time eager to win to his cause, with flattering words, the man whom he had so often and so basely vilified, Duke George of Saxony; but that true nobleman spurned his advances with the memorable words: "keep your Gospel; I keep mine, which the Church of Christ has received and given to me".<sup>2</sup> In October, 1526, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, presided at the first Lutheran synod, which he himself had convoked at Hamburg. This

<sup>1</sup> Menzel, Tom. I, 371.

<sup>2</sup> Luther's Works, Leipsic, 19, 361.

synod gave each congregation the full control of its own ecclesiastical discipline. In Electoral Saxony Luther's suggested system of parochial Visitation was adopted by John the Constant. A commission, composed of theologians and jurists, clerics and laymen, was appointed to visit the parishes and watch the propagation of the new Gospel. In this way the Lutheran Church, partly the outgrowth of civil power, became the tool of the reigning princes and the slave of the state, which it remains to the present day. The "Visitors" found that but few congregations desired a change in the sense intended by the reformers. They expressed their opinion that for the future the Prince Elector should appoint and discharge all pastors, and they warmly recommended the reestablishment of schools in the towns and villages.

But the confusion increased daily. Luther wrote to John the Constant on Nov. 22nd, 1526: "There is no end to the lamentations of the preachers in all places; the peasants give simply nothing and there is such an ingratitude among the people towards the holy Word of God, that God undoubtedly will send a great plague upon them. And if I knew how to do it with a good conscience, I would prevent them from having any pastors or preachers and let them live like swine, as they do anyhow. There is no longer either fear or love of God, because the pope's excommunication is abolished and each does what he likes. But as it is the duty of us all, chiefly of the magistracy, to train the poor youth and to keep them in the fear of God and in discipline, we must have schools and teachers and pastors. The parents,

if they do not wish this, may go to the devil." He then goes on to urge the prince, "as supreme head since the fall of the papal and clerical ordinations, to regulate such things; for nobody else can do it. Where there is a city or town which has the means to do so, they should be compelled by Your Electoral Grace to found schools, chairs of theology and parishes. Those, who do not wish to do so, shall be forced by you to do it, as they are bound to make bridges, cross-pieces and highways. But have they not the means, or are they heavily taxed otherwise, the property of the monasteries, originally intended for such a purpose, must be used in order to spare the poor man. A bad cry will be raised if the schools and presbyteries be allowed to fall and the nobility appropriate the treasures of the monasteries, as some do."<sup>1</sup>

A letter which Luther wrote on November 22d, 1526, gives clear evidence that in Saxony at that time there was no real adherence, no spirit of sacrifice, no enthusiasm whatever among the people for the new teachings. In another letter, addressed to the Prince Elector, February 3d, 1527, the Reformer describes the pitiful condition of the preachers. "I console them," he said, "with the future visitations. They have nothing and walk about and look like dried ghosts."<sup>2</sup>

Melanchthon composed for the parochial visitations his "Formulary or Book of Visitation," in which he gave a short exposition of the reformed faith, less harsh than Luther's doctrine, and practical instruc-

<sup>1</sup> De Wette 3, 135-137.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 3, 160.

tions about preaching. Luther was quite pleased with this book, "for it was so simply put down for the mob." In regard to the last supper, however, and the reviling of pope and bishops, of which manner of preaching Melanchton disapproved, Luther made some additional remarks: "The preachers shall directly and openly proclaim the doctrine of both forms before everybody, be he weak, strong or stubborn; they also shall violently condemn the papacy and its party, since God has already condemned it as the devil and his kingdom."<sup>1</sup> "We must," he said in the following year when interpreting the fifth book of Moses, "curse and revile the pope and his kingdom and not keep the mouth closed, but preach against it without ceasing. Some say we can do nothing else but condemn and abuse the pope and his own. This cannot be otherwise; for as soon as you forget the error, the grace of God will be forgotten and the inborn grace despised."<sup>2</sup>

A new order of Divine service, projected by Luther, was introduced into Saxony by the command of the Prince Elector, as the basis of Lutheran worship. To avoid scandalizing the people, many parts of the Catholic worship were retained in the reformed churches. Chief among these was the holy sacrifice of the mass. Not of his own accord, but forced by others, especially by the civil power, and, as he said himself, "for the sake of the simple-minded laity," Luther introduced a 'German' mass instead of the 'Latin' one. "The mass," he said on October 14th, 1526. "is the principal service or-

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 23, 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 36, 410.

dained for the consolation of true Christians." He did not exactly know whether the new German mass were pleasing to God; "therefore," he said, "I have fought for a long time against a German mass; but now, as so many ask me for it by writings and letters and as the civil power forces me, I have no excuse, but must regard it as the will of God."<sup>1</sup> Thus mass was said on Sundays, as in former times, by priests in sacred vestments, on altars which supported lighted candles of wax; and the ceremonies and chants which accompanied the sacrifice, were but slightly different from those of the old Roman ritual.<sup>2</sup> Even in after years Luther rejoiced at the fact that in churches of his creed but little change had been made in the ceremonies and that mass, choir, organ, bells and chasubles were retained; so that laymen and foreigners, who did not understand the sermon, would say: "This is a real papistical church."<sup>3</sup> In his service, however, he omitted the essential part of the Catholic mass, the Canon; but the common people were not allowed to learn this; for, as Melanchthon said, "they so adhered to the mass that nobody could take it from them."<sup>4</sup> Thus the people could not perceive the depth of the chasm that separated the new worship from the old.

Luther complained bitterly of the "unspeakable contempt the people showed towards the preachers of the new Gospel. The people take from them corn, oats, barley and whatever they want. The

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 14, 278.

<sup>2</sup> Corp. Reform, I, 991.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmliche Werke*, 28, 304.

<sup>4</sup> Corp. Reform, I, 842.

peasants in towns complain of it, when they have to put up a fence for their pastor; nay, they force him to herd cows and hogs like other peasants.”<sup>1</sup> “Our Evangelicals,” he says in another place, “are seven times worse than before. Since our devil has been expelled from us, seven stronger devils have entered, as we see in the actions of princes, lords, noblemen, citizens and peasants.”<sup>2</sup> Some time after this he remarked: “Citizens and peasants, men and women, children and servants, all are of the devil.” He even sorrowfully stated, as any Protestant minister in Berlin might state at the present day: “One tenth part refuses baptism.” When he learned that in Würtemberg they had abolished the mass, he exclaimed: “This is what Satan intended to do when he attacked this Sacrament: namely to abolish it entirely and to root out Christ. The devil, thus far advanced, will not rest until things grow worse.”<sup>3</sup>

Religious schism and confusion were becoming more general from year to year. According to Luther’s grand principle everybody was taught inwardly by God himself, and was his own judge in matters of faith. Thus, but a few years after the proclamation of this principle, we find Lutherans, Carlstadtians, Bucerians, Zwinglians, Anabaptists and other sects, all, like the Protestants of the present, differing among themselves but united in one common hatred against Rome.

Luther was seriously alarmed at this disorder in the camp. “Under one magistracy”, he wrote,

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 6, 182, *et sequ.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 36, 411.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 3, 453—454.

"if it can be done, discording doctrine should not be tolerated, but further dirt should be avoided. And though people do not believe, yet for the sake of the ten commandments they ought to be driven to the sermon, so that they may learn at least the exterior work of obedience".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> De Wette, III., 498

## XVI.

To stop the propagation of the new gospel Ferdinand, brother of Charles V., convoked a diet at Spire in 1529. Here the majority of States decreed that the Lutherans should abstain from all further innovations until the assembling of an ecumenical council, and that the ministers of the Church should preach the Gospel according to the Church's interpretation. But the Lutheran princes solemnly protested against this ; " whence ", says Alzog, " their name, ' Protestants ', which they have ever since retained ; and their only bond of unity from that day to this has been a common protest against the Catholic Church."

The real disunion of the German nation may be dated from this diet at Spire, where the Lutheran princes appeared publicly as a decided faction. Melanchthon foresaw with terror the bad consequences to Church and State which would be effected by such a dissension. " I was so terrified ", he wrote shortly after his return from Spire, " that during the first days I felt as if dead ; all the torments of hell seemed to oppress me. It is a great affair and full of peril. There is danger that out of these beginnings an overthrow will follow in the empire ; and not only the empire is in peril, but religion also." <sup>1</sup>

Zwinglius, the reforming apostle of Switzerland,

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<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Reform.*, I., 1068—1070.

rejected the dogma of Christ's real presence in the Holy Eucharist. Luther was enraged against his dissenting Swiss brother. He declared that Zwinglius had lost Christ ; that his books should be avoided like the poison of Satan ; that his art consisted in talking and weeping much, in answering and understanding nothing. "We for our part", he said, "maintain that according to the words of Christ his true body and blood are there. Our adversary says there is mere bread and wine. One party must be of the devil and God's enemy ; there is no escape". He had no hope of ever converting Zwinglius : "It is unheard of that one who invented a false doctrine was ever converted ; for Christ himself could not convert a high-priest, but his disciples". In October, 1525, Luther had written : "I shall ever regard those who deny the real presence as outside of the faith". He also said "he had often experienced that Christ was present ; because he had had terrible visions. He had often seen angels; so that he was forced to abstain from mass".

Landgrave Philip, desiring to effect a reconciliation between Luther and Zwinglius, invited the two champions to Marburg for Oct. 1st, 1529. They went thither ; but the disputation, instead of reconciling them, only separated them the more. Luther on this occasion made the following remarkable confession : "We must acknowledge that in the papacy are the truths of salvation, which we have inherited. We, moreover, acknowledge that in the papacy we find the true Scripture, the true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true keys for the remission of sins, the true office of preaching, the true

catechism which contains the Lord's Prayer, the ten commandments, the articles of faith. I say that in the papacy we find the true Christianity, the true essence of Christianity".<sup>1</sup>

Zwinglius besought Luther not to refuse the Sacramentarians as brethren, "for we wish to die in the Communion of Wittenberg". But Luther obstinately answered: "No, no; cursed be such alliance, which would endanger the cause of God and men's souls. Begone! You are possessed by another spirit than ours".<sup>2</sup> "The Zwinglians", he exclaimed, "are a set of diabolical fanatics; they have a legion of devils in their hearts and are wholly in their power". On another occasion, however, he had given the reason why Zwinglius and his friends did not understand the Sacred Scriptures: "because they never have had the devil for their adversary. For when we have not the devil tied to our neck, we are but speculative theologians". Zwinglius returned the compliment by seriously declaring that "Luther was not possessed by one evil spirit, but occupied by a legion of devils".

In June, 1530, Charles V. returned to Germany after an absence of nine years. He immediately repaired to the great diet at Augsburg. On June 24th the papal legate, Campeggio, exhorted the States in a mild and conciliatory manner not to separate themselves from the Catholic Church, to which all other Christian kings and powers were subject.

At the emperor's request, the Protestants laid be-

<sup>1</sup> Op. Luth. Jenae, Germ. fol., 408, 409.

<sup>2</sup> Erasmi Epist. ad Cochlaeum.

fore his majesty a written profession of their faith. This document had been drawn up and reconstructed, changed and rechanged, with tears and sighs, by the mild Melanchthon and met the full approval of his Master, Martin Luther. Melanchthon tried to cloak with insidious language Luther's gross and heretical principles; but, as Alzog says, "with all his care and skill he could not clothe error in the vesture of truth".

This confession was read before the States in the Diet and then handed over for examination to a committee of learned Catholic theologians, including Eck, Wimpina, Cochlaeus, John Faber and others. Calmly and dispassionately they discussed the Confession in the light of Catholic truth; their answer is called the "Confutation of the Augsburg Confession". The emperor now commanded the Protestant princes to renounce their error and return to the faith of Christ, and "should you refuse", he said, "we shall regard it a conscientious duty to proceed as our coronation oath and our office require". But when the gentlehearted Charles,—of whom even Luther wrote in that same year: "It is wonderful how fervently all love the emperor"—, saw the displeasure which his declaration had caused among Protestant princes, he consented that Protestant and Catholic commissions, each composed of an equal number of theologians and jurists, should dispute on religious questions in his presence. It was certainly sheer folly to try to bring about a reconciliation in this way; for the Lutherans were constantly shifting ground and at times even maintaining, or pretending to maintain Catholic doctrines.

On July 6th, Melanchton wrote to the papal legate: "We have no dogma which differs from the doctrines of the Roman Church. We are ready to obey the Church, if according to her clemency, which she has shown at all times to all peoples, she overlook silently certain matters of trivial importance or forgive what, though we wish it, we cannot mend. We honor with reverence the Pope of Rome and the whole constitution of the Church, if the pope only does not repel us. We are hated in Germany because we are defending with the greatest constancy the doctrines of the Roman Church. We shall show this faithfulness to Christ and the Roman Church unto the last breath of life, even when you should refuse to receive us in grace." On the very same day, his Master wrote in a Commentary on the Second Psalm, dedicated to the Archbishop of Mentz: "I beseech you, Lords, take care and do not imagine that you are dealing with men, if you be dealing with the pope and his own, but with real devils."<sup>1</sup> Five weeks later, Melanchthon himself called the pope "an Antichrist," under whom one is treated "as the Jews under Pharao in Egypt."<sup>2</sup>

Luther was under the ban of the empire, and could not appear in Augsburg to participate in the diet. But from his residence, at Coburg, he exercised a strong influence on the Protestant States and their theologians, who were continually consulting him. He would not hear of any reconciliation with the papists, and thought a union of doctrine impossible "as long as the pope would not give up the pap-

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 54, 167-168.

<sup>2</sup> *Corp. Reform.*, 2, 284.

acy."<sup>1</sup> He grew so uneasy about the transactions of his friends at the diet, that he wrote to Augsburg, on September 20th, 1530: "I am nearly bursting of anger and repugnance, and I pray you to cut short the affair, to cease negotiating and return home."<sup>2</sup> He threatened the "vengeance of the devil" upon any of his friends, who should yield anything to the papacy. He exhorted them to persevere in their obstinacy, and he wrote to Melanchton: "After once having escaped violence and obtained peace, we shall correct our tricks and mistakes."<sup>3</sup>

The marriages of nuns and priests, according to the canons, were declared null and void by the diet, and pernicious to the cause of religion, "since people," as John Faber wrote, "can have no respect for married priests." Luther himself had to confess: "Nothing good can be found in ministers of the church who are married; they are despised and rejected, and have become a curse, a purgatory, the scorn and contempt of all people."<sup>4</sup> Even the jurists of the Lutheran party at Wittenberg, in their public lectures, declared the marriages of priests invalid, and their children illegitimate and incapable of inheriting the property of their parents. "Up to this time," Luther said complainingly, "I cannot find a jurist who will take my part; they refuse to acknowledge any legitimacy for my children;" and, being encouraged by his so-called wife, he informed

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 4, 144.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 4, 170.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 4, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Döllinger's *Reformation*, I, 288.

jurists in general that they were “impious and proud rascals, whose tongues should be torn out of their throats” for pointing out the old law of Church and State.<sup>1</sup>

The princes of the new Gospel regarded intolerance against Catholics as a duty of conscience. With the words ‘conscience’ and ‘Gospel’ they sought to cover every proceeding against human or divine law. Thus, when the emperor emphatically demanded the restitution of all the church-property which they had stolen and taken possession of, they refused to obey his command, denying that it was a duty of ‘conscience’ in this case to make restitution, notwithstanding the fact that it is and always was against the divine word and against all papal and secular rights to take the property of another. Luther seemed to have felt differently from his disciples, for he wrote to Spalatinus: “This is a very serious question, the spoliation of the monasteries. Believe me, the affair torments me vehemently.”<sup>2</sup> After reading, however, the inflammatory exhortations, in which he so strongly advised their destruction, we may be allowed the privilege, which we have so often before had occasion to use, of doubting the Reformer’s truthfulness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 62, 238, 254.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 3, 147.

## XVII.

All the negotiation and controversy failed to bring about a reconciliation. On September 22nd the emperor issued an edict in which he declared that the Protestants had been refuted by sound and unanswerable arguments drawn from Holy Scripture; but in order to preserve peace and unity in the empire he granted them, until April 15th, 1531, to consider the matter and make up their minds to return to the faith of their fathers.

The Protestant princes, filled with anxiety and consternation on account of the determined attitude which the emperor had taken, entered into an alliance at Schmalkald and resolved to take up arms for the maintenance of Protestantism. They even negotiated with France, England and other powers against the emperor. A civil war would have been unavoidable, had not the danger of a Turkish invasion forced the emperor to make peace with the Schmalkaldians, who refused to assist him in repelling the Turks. In this dire necessity, therefore, the emperor promised at Nürnberg (1532) that until the assembling of a general council no action should be taken against the Protestant princes.

One might suppose that Luther would finally grow weary of his continual war and rage against the papacy and everything connected with it, especially when he saw the frightful confusion and

havoc which the propagation of his doctrine had caused in his once so united and glorious fatherland; but history proves the contrary. His fury against the divinely established Church increased with his years. "The peace," he said, "which is bought by detriment to Gospel and faith, is to be banished into hell." His 'Gospel', as we have learned, was "justification by faith alone" and the "slavery of the human will"; this must be preached at the cost of everything else. "It is terrible", he exclaimed, "but it cannot be otherwise. They say that when the pope falls, Germany will perish and be wrecked. What can I do? I cannot preserve it. Whose fault is it? It is a common cry: 'If the Gospel had not been preached, everything would be peaceful': No, my fellow. It shall come never."<sup>1</sup>

At the request of the notorious Landgrave Philip, Luther published his "Warning to my Dear Germans Against the Decrees of Augsburg" and his "Comments on the Imperial Edict." In these he anathematized the Catholics and gave vent once more to his burning 'Gospel zeal'. "Oh! Infamous Diet", he tragically exclaimed, "such as never was held nor heard of and such as never will be held nor heard of; such as will cover with infamy the princes and the whole nation and make all Germans blush before God and men. Who under heaven will henceforth fear or respect the Germans, when they know that we have permitted ourselves to be insulted, ridiculed, treated as children, as stocks, as stones by the cursed pope and his gang." He takes occasion in this pamphlet to inform us once more that the Vicar

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 46, 226-229, and 48, 342.

of Christ is identical with Satan and that his adherents are "obdurate blasphemers, murderers of souls, rascals, pope's asses, living devils"; and he concludes with these terrible words: "The blasphemous papacy and whatever is connected with it, begone to the bottom of hell, as John announces in the Apocalypse! Amen. Let everyone, who professes to be a good Christian, say amen."<sup>1</sup>

There was a time when Luther was one of the most popular men in all Germany. There had been growing among the people a common desire for a reform of certain abuses which had crept into the Church's discipline. These abuses were not doctrinal nor could they effect in the least the divine constitution or nature of the Church; and while the Wittenberg monk pretended to confine himself to the correction of these abuses and scandals, he was hailed as a reformer. But the people never dreamed of a separation from the Church nor of the creation of sects; and when Luther began to preach open rebellion against lawful authority and, after the failure of the rebellion which he had caused, advised the slaughter of the rebels, he naturally became an object of execration to both nobles and peasants. A few princes only, whose guilty consciences were better soothed by the lax morals of the Wittenberg Gospel than by the strict law of the ancient Church, and who were greedy for the treasures of monasteries and convents, remained staunch patrons of the apostate monk and his doctrine. The poor man, who had to choose between accepting the Lutheran creed enforced by his sovereign and quitting his country with

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, 25, 1 et seq.

wife and children, was naturally opposed to the new doctrine and longed for the “ horrors of the papacy.”

A few months before the opening of the Diet of Augsburg, Luther’s father fell dangerously ill at Mansfield. Luther was much concerned about it and sought to console him with a letter; he would not venture to visit him, as he feared that the people might slay him on the journey. “I would like exceedingly,” he writes, “to come to you in person; but my good friends advise me not to tempt God by risking the journey, for you know how I am beloved by the nobles and and the peasantry. I might come to you, but there is danger in returning.”<sup>1</sup> Two years before this Melanchthon had written to a friend: “We see how the people hate us.”<sup>2</sup>

The attachment of the people to Luther’s doctrine was no stronger than their attachment to the apostate himself. During the year preceding the Diet of Augsburg he wrote: “They now say the monks sang and prayed much and fasted, and all for the honor and glory of God; which pleased the common man”. “They accuse me of being a rebel, of sundering the unity of the Church; and whatever of evil is done, they say, is done on my account”. “Formerly under the papacy, they cry, things were not so bad; but now, since these teachers come, every misfortune befalls us, hard times, war and the Turks”. “Many say peace is broken, the world is in trouble, men are confused in mind and heart, religion is decaying, the divine worship is disturbed, lawful obedience abrogated; what good came from the gospel?

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 3, 550.

<sup>2</sup> Corp. Reform. I, 941.

Formerly everything was better". Shortly after the close of the diet Luther said : " Everybody now complains and cries that the Gospel causes much discord, controversy and disorder in the world ; and since it arose, things are worse than in former times when all went on smoothly, and when there was no persecution, and people lived together as good friends and neighbors". " People ", he said, " would like to drive him out of the country and starve him ". They were still so much attached to the old Church that Luther declared : " If I wished, I could easily with two or three sermons make my people turn back to the papacy and cause new pilgrimages and masses ". " I know, in truth, that there are scarcely ten in Wittenberg whom I could not seduce, if I would again use such holiness as I used when a monk under the papacy ".<sup>1</sup>

The princes, to whom the reformer had entrusted the church government and who disposed of the church property, were the only ones who protected the new doctrine and granted lodgings to its preachers. Luther confesses that, though the Protestant princes were kind and generous to the teachers of the new doctrine, yet the nobles, citizens and peasants had only contempt and hatred for them and " would, if it were in their power, have expelled them long ago from their lodgings ". " Only for the princes and nobles ", he said again, " we should not remain long. Let us pray for the Prince Elector, that he may preserve the Church ".<sup>2</sup> Civil power was always the support of Luther's church and thus,

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 6, 280; 43, 63, 279, 316; 9, 336; 6, 106.

<sup>2</sup> Walch, I, 2444.

as the Protestant historian, Karl Hagen, remarks, "Protestant theology was moulded into a court-theology, which throws itself into the dust before the powerful of the earth and covers their acts of violence with a mantle of hypocritical Christian charity".

## XVIII.

Up to this time, despite the united efforts of pope and emperor, the Ecumenical Council, to which Luther had been always appealing, could not be convened; but now, when the question was seriously agitated, the Protestants raised objections against it and finally declined to attend it.

Paul III. sent his legate, Vergerius, to Germany, to announce the opening of this council in Mantua. Passing through Wittenberg, Vergerius desired to see Luther, and therefore invited him to dinner. Köstlin (II, 373) tells us how neatly Luther prepared himself for the interview: "He put on his best clothes and a gold chain around his neck, and when his barber, who had to shave him and fix his hair carefully, wondered at this extraordinary preparation, Luther told him that he was to meet the legate of the pope, before whom he had to appear young so that he may think: 'Ah! Luther is still vigorous and can cause much trouble'. But the barber thought that it would only rouse the anger of the Romans, to which Luther replied: "This I intend for having angered me and my disciples; thus foxes and serpents have to be treated". The barber then piously wished that the Lord might be with him and he might succeed in converting the Roman gentlemen. Luther answered: "I shall not do that, but it might happen that I should

rebuke them earnestly and then let them go." When he was seated with Pomeranus in the carriage which was to take them to Vergerius, Luther laughingly exclaimed: "There drive the German Pope and Cardinal Pomeranus, the tools of God." In his conference with the papal legate he said: "Illuminated by the Holy Ghost, we are assured of all points and have no need of a council; but I shall go to the council, and may I lose my head, if I do not defend my doctrine against the whole world. Whatever proceeds from my mouth, is not my wrath but the wrath of God."<sup>1</sup> To inspire his followers with a wholesome respect for the coming council, the apostate taught them: "The papal Church is Satan's school, which publicly inculcates sin and forbids justice."<sup>2</sup>

In opposition to the Ecumenical Council the reformers intended to convene a national Protestant council. For this purpose Luther composed the "Articles of Schmalkald," which presented a striking contrast to the Augsburg Confession, and in which he no longer attacked the "abuses and scandals" in the Church, but the old, Catholic doctrines of the Mass, Purgatory, the Papacy, etc.

Under the powerful protection of the Protestant princes and an army he expected to gather his disciples into a council of his own; but violent sufferings from *calculus* hindered him from convening this mock council. Even on his sick-bed, when in seeming danger of death, he continued faithfully to revile the papacy and its friends. "I would wish to live,"

<sup>1</sup> Walch, 16, 2296.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 31, 392 et seq.

he said, "till Pentecost that I might stigmatize in open print the Roman beast, the Pope, and his kingdom, which I will certainly do if God keep me alive; and no devil shall prevent me from doing so." His pain became so intense that he exclaimed: "I wish there were a Turk here to kill me." "I would be ready to die, if only the devil's legate were not in Schmalkald and would not cry out to the world that I died for fear and trembling."<sup>1</sup>

He had scarcely recovered, when he left Schmalkald with the parting words: "May God fill you with hatred for the Pope."<sup>2</sup> He talked himself into such unreasonable rage against the papacy, that he could not mention the Pope's name without adding that of the devil.

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<sup>1</sup> Keil, Luther's *Lebensumstände*, Leipzig 1764. See 3, 92—105.

<sup>2</sup> Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, Breslau 1854. Vide 1, 283—284.

## XIX.

In the Diet of Frankfurt the Protestants refused to grant toleration to Catholic worship, "because in one and the same country or town unity of religious service must be preserved;"<sup>1</sup> they, however, demanded that Catholics should give "free entrance" to the "Gospel." "If I were the Landgrave of Hesse," Luther wrote, "I would venture either to punish or to kill them (the Catholics), because they would not grant peace for a just cause; but as a preacher it becomes me not to give such advice, nor to do it." He called Philip of Hesse "a miracle of God and a hero."<sup>2</sup> But if Charles V. were to war against Protestants, he should be resisted like a Turk because he might then be regarded as a "mercenary in papal service."<sup>3</sup>

But who was this "miracle of God," this "hero" of the new Church? Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, was one of the most violent, immoral, superstitious and fraudulent princes that ever lived. He had been married to Christina, daughter of Duke George of Saxony, for sixteen years and was the father of eight children; but not even for three years, as he confessed himself, was he faithful to his wife. He lived in open adultery and public debauchery. And now, with Luther's approbation, he was to add another to

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<sup>1</sup> Seckendorf III, 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, 62, 86.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 5, 10.

his long list of crimes,—a crime which according to the laws of the empire was punishable with death,—the crime of bigamy.

He wished to take for his second wife Margaret von der Saale, maid of honor to his sister Elizabeth, and was trying to legalize the marriage by obtaining the written consent of the reformers. With this purpose, he sent a document to the great Wittenberg theologians, in which he declared it his intention to marry Margaret in order to free himself from the “snares of the devil.” Explaining the Bible according to Luther’s principle, he asserted that the Scripture does not forbid us to have two wives. Moreover, he added, Luther and Melanchthon had advised the king of England not to divorce his first wife, but to take a second; he demanded the same privilege, “that he might live and die cheerfully and pursue the Protestant quarrels in a more free and Christianlike manner.” Should they refuse this trifling favor, he threatened that he would go over to the emperor.<sup>1</sup>

This request of the Landgrave caused Luther and Melanchthon a great deal of trouble and perplexity. In their answer, dated December 10th, 1539, they began by expressing joy at the Landgrave’s recovery from a nameless disease, “for the poor, wretched Church of Christ is small and abandoned, and truly needs pious lords and sovereigns.” In regard to the matrimonial affair,—a distinction should be made between a common law and a dispensation in a case of necessity. They could not make a law permitting everybody to take more than one wife; but in

<sup>1</sup> Corp. Reform., 3, 851.

such sport, the more sympathy and sorrow I had in thinking of the mysterious truth the picture concealed. For the picture teaches nothing else than that the devil, through his godless masters and dogs—the bishops and theologians—secretly hunts and catches the innocent little animals—the common people. It is the picture of simple and believing souls which is thus vividly presented to my sorrowing heart. And once it happened that a poor little rabbit took refuge in the sleeve of my coat lying by the way. The dogs in their pursuit scented its hiding-place, first wounded, and then killed it. Thus the Pope and Satan rage in their efforts to ruin saved souls, without concerning themselves about my labors."

He delighted to roam about the beautiful woods surrounding the castle searching for strawberries. This pastime was conducive to his health, for as late as October of that year (1521) his bodily ailments caused him so much trouble that he at one time intended to leave his asylum and visit Erfurt for medical advice. He passed many a day in melancholy and depression of spirits. At such times he believed himself to be tormented by the Evil One. Thus he relates the following incident : " It was in the year 1521 that I was in Patmos on the Wartburg, alone in my little room, no one being permitted to come to me save two pages of honor who brought me food and drink. They had bought me a bag of hazelnuts, of which I ate from time to time, and which I locked up in a chest. One evening on retiring, I heard some one at the hazelnuts, cracking one after another with force against the rafters ; then the noise approached my bed, but I cared little for that. After I had fallen asleep there began such a tumult on the stairway, as if threescore barrels were being thrown down. I arose, went to the stairs, and cried out, ' Art thou here ? (meaning the Evil One).

So be it !' I then commended my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said (Psalm viii. 6), ' Thou hast put all things under His feet,' and retired to rest. For this is the best method to expel him (the devil) : despising him and calling upon Christ. That he cannot endure." But finally, when Satan exceeded all bounds, as the legend records, Luther threw his inkstand at him, and he never returned again !\*

But neither sickness nor interdict could bend his will or paralyze his working powers. Not long had he been on the burg when he occupied himself with the translation of the Scriptures, as well as with other writings. In a few weeks several works were ready for the press. A treatise "About Confession, and whether the Pope is entitled to command the same," he dedicated to his particular friend and firm patron, Francisco von Sickingen.

Besides commenting upon selected portions of Holy Scripture intended to instruct, comfort, and edify Christian people, Luther sent out many a heavy controversial article from the Wartburg. Thus he directed a vigorous attack upon the Archbishop Albert of Mayence, brother of the Elector of Brandenburg. This Church dignitary, in need of money, had again set up the traffic with indulgences in the city of Halle, establishing a great shrine of relics, and inviting all to visit the same. He had collected a multitude of glorious relics, about nine thousand in number. Among these were remains of saints, a portion of the body of the patriarch Isaac, remnants of manna, pieces of Moses' burning bush, jugs

\* The spot is still shown, in the Luther room of the Wartburg Castle, where the inkstand struck the wall. The plastering, however, has disappeared, being dug out and carried off by vandal visitors.

and invective. Luther directed against him a most infamous libel, entitled "Against the Buffoon," which raised doubts in the minds of many as to whether the writer had not lost his wits. "The duke has daily swallowed devils, and he is chained in hell with the chains of divine judgement."—Always "devils" and "hell" and "brimstone"; hardly a sentence without these odious words.—He exhorted the preachers to denounce Henry from the pulpits and to tell the people that "not only Henry has been damned by divine judgement, but also pope, cardinals, bishops, priests and monks."<sup>1</sup> Yet, when revising this pamphlet, he wrote to Melanchthon that he found he had been too moderate in it.<sup>2</sup>

Henry tried to subjugate those rebellious subjects in Brunswick who had joined the League of Schmalkald. The Protestant princes, however, resolved to assist the rebels. They invaded Henry's states, devastating and plundering the Catholic churches, stealing the treasures of the monasteries and, in a word, introducing the light of the Wittenberg Gospel. Henry was forced to flee from his duchy and seek refuge in Bavaria. Luther called this victory of the Evangelicals a "miracle of God," and declared blasphemously that God had been in the affair<sup>3</sup> while his friend Melanchthon attributed it to the protection of the angels.<sup>4</sup>

In a pamphlet, entitled "Of Shem Hamphoras", Luther excited the people to open war against the

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 26, 1-75.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 5, 342.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 5, 490-496.

<sup>4</sup> Corp. Reform., 4, 879.

Jews, whom he had so often and so violently attacked in his earlier writings. In this, his last savage libel against the sons of Israel, he demanded their expulsion and the abolition of their worship, and called them a set of "devils doomed to hell."<sup>1</sup>

At the Diet at Worms (1545) the Protestants again declared that they would take no part in the Ecumenical Council of Trent, and gave expression to their religious feelings in language which was so coarse and violent that it aroused the anger of Charles V. But the emperor was still more provoked at the latest publication which Luther had scattered through Germany, "the last great testimony against the papacy", as Koestlin calls it.<sup>2</sup> This shameless work was preceded by an obscene frontispiece, the work of Luke Cranach, who illustrated a great many of Luther's writings. The reformer seems to have rallied all his declining strength in order to pour forth, in this last literary effort, the fullness of his hatred and rage against Rome. He entitled the book: "The Papacy an Institution of the Devil".

With the consent of the Prince Elector he appealed to a religious war for the destruction of the papacy, or rather of the Catholic Church. He styles the popes "arch-rascals, murderers, traitors and liars"; the pope and his followers could not be corrected by a council "because they neither believe in God nor in life to come, but live and die like cattle. The best thing the emperor and the States can do is, to let the cursed set of Rome go to the

<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 32, 275, et sequ.

<sup>2</sup> 2, 588.

devil; a council can effect nothing". He then gives a very ingenious and original plan for abolishing the papacy: "Now then seize upon it, ye emperors, kings, princes and lords. May God withhold his blessing from lazy hands. First take from the pope Rome, Romandiola, Urbino, Bologna and all that he possesses; for whatever he possesses he has obtained by lies, frauds, nay even blasphemies and idolatries, robbed from the empire. Therefore hang up the pope, the cardinals and all the papal rabble; tear out their blaspheming tongues, and fix them on a gibbet as they clap their seals on their bulls. Then they may hold a council, or as many as they like, on the gallows or in hell among all the devils".<sup>1</sup>

Willibald Pirkheimer, a contemporary of Luther's, was so disgusted at this furious language, that he wrote: "Luther must be completely insane or else possessed by an evil spirit". And yet Luther himself called it a "pious and useful" book, which pleased the Elector of Saxony so much that he sent for twenty florins' worth of copies.<sup>2</sup> The reformer desired to write more against the pope, but his intense sufferings hindered him from doing so; he had to content himself, therefore, with the pious wish that pope and cardinals might be afflicted with his disease.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sämmtliche Werke*, 26, 108-228.

<sup>2</sup> Seckendorf, III, 556.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 5, 443.

## XX.

Luther's last hours were imbibed by "unspeakable cares and tortures" about the desperate condition of his country and the religious anarchy which his doctrine had caused among his countrymen. He noticed with horror the growing immorality and the evil spirit of insubordination to authority. "We live in Sodoma and Babylon", he wrote to Prince George of Anhalt; "everything is daily growing worse".<sup>1</sup>

In the district of Wittenberg, where the reformer had labored so ardently, there was, according to his own statement, "but one peasant who urged his domestics to the Word of God and the Catechism; all others were going to the devil". "Nobles, citizens and peasants trample religion under their feet, and drive away their preachers by starvation".<sup>2</sup> "They wish to be damned", he wrote on January 8th, 1544; "may it be done as they wish".<sup>3</sup> But in Wittenberg itself corruption and depravity were making large advances under the "light of the Gospel" and its hero. Luther was so disgusted with the Wittenbergers' wantonness and libertinism, that he left the city and instructed his Catharine to sell out and follow him, as they soon "will have the

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 5, 722.

<sup>2</sup> Lauterbach's *Tagebuch* 113, 114, 135.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette 5, 773.

devils dance in Wittenberg". "Away from this Sodom! I would rather go about the world as a stranger and eat the bread of a beggar than pass the few remaining miserable days of my life in trouble and as a martyr in Wittenberg".<sup>1</sup> He returned, however, at the request of the Elector; but he soon threatened to leave again.

As his last moments approached, his remorse of conscience increased. It tormented him cruelly day and night. But he regarded his doubts and anxieties as temptations of Satan, and even repelled the objections of reason by calling reason the devil's bride. "I have almost lost Christ," he said, "and am tossed about in billows and storms of despair and blasphemy against God."<sup>2</sup> What wonder then that he could not utter a prayer without a curse! On January 17th, 1546, about a month before his death, he wrote to a friend: "I am old, decrepit, indolent, fatigued, tremulous and blind of an eye; I hoped for repose in my old age, but I have nothing but suffering."<sup>3</sup>

Though broken in health and depressed in mind, Luther consented to undertake a journey to Eisenleben in order to settle a quarrel between the two counts of Mansfield. While passing through the city of Halle he saw some monks in their habits. This excited his anger to such a degree, that he demanded of the city authorities the expulsion of the "lousy, shabby monks."<sup>4</sup> In another place the

<sup>1</sup> De Wette 5, 453.

<sup>2</sup> De Wette, 3, 189.

<sup>3</sup> De Wette, 5, 778.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, 16, 126.

Jews provoked his passion so much, that he wished for their destruction "for the glory of God". On February 1st, 1546, he wrote to Catherine: "When I shall have finished my principal business, I shall devote my chief energies to the expulsion of the Jews. Count Albert hates them heartily and has declared them outlaws; but so far no one has done them harm. Should it be God's will, I shall mount the pulpit and with Count Albert declare them beyond the pale of the law."<sup>1</sup>

In Eisleben he was munificently entertained, and he emptied many a glass to the downfall of the papacy. When he saw the wine flowing on the floor in the Castle of the Counts, he said: "There soon will the grass grow." On February 17th, 1546, he seized a piece of chalk and wrote upon the wall: "*Pestis eram, vivus; moriens, ero mors tua, papa!*" — ("Living, O Pope, I was thy pest; dying, I shall be thy death!")<sup>2</sup> He died on the night of February 18th.

"Thus suddenly," Alzog says, "and prematurely was Luther stricken down, in the town where he had been born and baptized, after he had passed his life and exerted his powerful influence in setting people against people, sundering social bonds and inflicting a severe, though not, as he fancied, a fatal wound upon the Church of his fathers." Luther was hated and execrated by Catholics during his life and after his death; but by his followers his memory has been cherished in speech and poem; and he even now enjoys among many Protestants the honor and de-

<sup>1</sup> De Wette, 5, 784—787.

<sup>2</sup> Ratzenberger, 138.

votion which Catholics pay to canonized saints. But for his poor Catharine and children nobody seemed to care. They lived and died in poverty and misery after seeking vainly for support from the Protestant princes and the 'Reformer's' other admirers.

# APPENDIX.

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## § I.

### LUTHER'S PUBLIC CHARACTER,

AS DESCRIBED BY REV. DR. ALZOG IN HIS UNIVERSAL CHURCH HISTORY.

Luther closed his career of a Reformer as he had opened it, breathing hostility against the Pope, and uttering driveling contradictions like the following : "The Pope is the most holy and the most devilish of fathers." His teachings, like his life, are full of inconsistencies. Shortly before his death, he declared that the Scriptures contained mysteries and unfathomable depths, in the presence of which one must humbly bow his head.

But however numerous and glaring may have been the inconsistencies of Luther's life and teachings, he was always at one with himself in insolent pride and self-sufficiency, and in the testament containing his last will showed his usual impatience and contempt of all the accepted forms of human right and law.

Judging Luther by the wonderful activity and tumultuous excitement of his life, he is one of the most remarkable men

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<sup>1</sup> Manual of Universal Church History by the Rev. Dr. John Alzog.—Translated from the German by Rev. Dr. Pabisch and Rev. T. Byrne.

the world has ever produced ; but regarding him in his character as a reformer of the Church, he made the most disastrous failure of any person who ever attempted that difficult task, for the reason that he was totally destitute of the necessary virtues of charity and humility. Arrogantly rejecting the authority of the Church, he soon learned that he had acted precipitately and unwisely, and was forced to shelter himself behind it to successfully defend himself against his adversaries. That he possessed courage is undeniable ; but it is equally true that his courage frequently degenerated into foolish bravado. His activity was ceaseless and untiring, and his eloquence popular and captivating, his mind quick, his imagination brilliant, his character unselfish, and his temper profoundly religious. This overmastering religious sentiment, so characteristic of his system, contrasts strangely with the habitual blasphemy and sarcasm of his language. Hence, Erasmus said that he was a compound of two personalities. "At times," says the scholar of Rotterdam, "he writes like an apostle and again he talks like a fool." His jests are so coarse, and his thrusts so reckless, that he seems utterly forgetful of the figure he is cutting, or the spectacle he is presenting to the world. When I pray (*i. e.*, say the Our Father), said Luther, on one occasion, I can't help cursing the whole time. While declaiming against the use of arms in vindicating the rights of religion, he put forth principles and employed language that might have done honor to a Jacobin of the eighteenth century. Apparently frank and honest in his advocacy of an unlimited freedom in interpreting the Holy Scriptures, he refused to his adversaries the right which he vauntingly arrogated to himself; and while proclaiming the glorious prerogatives of free inquiry, conducted himself toward his most devoted adherents, and most intimate friends, Melanchthon among the rest, as a tyrant and a despot. So imperious was he in the assertion of his magisterial authority, and so exacting in its exercise, that Melanchthon confesses: that, in his own

case, it amounted to a degrading slavery. (*Tuli servitutem paene deformem*). When it is further borne in mind that Luther was both a glutton and a drunkard, having so little regard for ordinary proprieties that he brutally wrote to his wife, in a letter dated July 2, 1540: "I am feeding like a Bohemian and swilling like a German, thanks be to God," that in speaking of marriage, the most sacred of social institutions, he gave utterance to thoughts so indecent in language, so coarse and revolting, that one seeks in vain to find an apology for him in the lax morals of that lax age; and that he employed this language not alone at table but in his published writings, and public addresses, one feels bound, apart from any consideration of the perversity of his principles or the falsity of his teachings, to say that he is hardly such a person as would be singled out as having received a vocation to inaugurate and carry out a moral reform. It has always been characteristic of those who have had any success in carrying out reforms in the Church that they began their work by first reforming themselves, and it is hardly necessary to remark that this was not Luther's method. To discover the notes of a reformer in the ungovernable transports, the riotous proceedings, the angry conflicts, and the intemperate controversies which made up the life of Luther, presupposes a partiality amounting to blindness.

"It must be evident," says Erasmus, "to the most feeble intellect, that one who raised so great storm in the world, who always found pleasure in using language either indecent or caustic, could not have been called of God. His arrogance, to which no parallel can be found, was scarcely distinguishable from madness; and his buffoonery was such that it could not be supposed possible in one doing the work of God."

His character is accurately portrayed in the following brief sketch from the pen of Pallavicini. "The products of his prolific genius," says the distinguished historian of the Council of Trent, "were extravagant and abnormal, rather than choice

and correct, resembling more some gigantic offspring of immature birth, than the shapely babe brought forth after the lapse of nature's appointed time. His intellect was vigorous and robust ; but its strength was expended in pulling down, not in building up. Gifted with a tenacious memory, he had acquired a vast deal of erudition, which he poured forth, as the occasion demanded, in impetuous torrents resembling a thunder-storm in its angry and destructive fury, rather than the refreshing rains of summer, that brighten and gladden the face of nature. He was an eloquent speaker and writer ; but his eloquence was more like the whirl-wind, blinding the eyes with a cloud of dust, than the placid flow of a peaceful fountain, delighting them with light and color. His language was such that, throughout the whole of his works, not a single sentence can be found wholly free from a certain coarseness and vulgarity. Courageous to temerity in prosperous, he was cowardly to abjectness in adverse fortune. Professing his readiness to remain silent if his adversaries would do the same, he clearly showed that he was actuated, not by a motive of zeal for God's glory, but by feelings of jealousy and self-love. Princes were among his followers ; but they became such not from any desire of forwarding his cause, but in the hope of enriching themselves with the property of the Church. The harm he did to the Church, was indeed great ; but while bringing incomparable disaster upon others, brought no advantage to himself. His name will be memorable in history for all time, but as a name of infamy and dishonor. Now that the rotten branches have been lopped from the vine of the Church, the sound and living ones will thrive and flourish all the better for their absence."

## § 2.

After reading the life of Martin Luther, a question naturally presents itself to the mind of the reader : how was it possible that a made-over religion, fixed up by such a man, should have been adopted by so many ? In reply to this question, we append some of the causes which Cardinal Hergenröther<sup>1</sup> brings forward to account for the spread of Protestantism :

“ Like the heresies that were before it, Protestantism had its rise in the pride and in the passions of its founders. The reasons of its spreading so widely are to be found in the political, religious and literary conditions of the time and especially in local and personal circumstances. Everything seemed to favor the new teaching ; in particular :

“ 1. The civil governments of the day had been gradually estranging themselves from the Church ;

“ 2. A dislike of Rome, long and in many ways nourished, had been greatly strengthened by loud cries of abuse ;

“ 3. The inclination of many chronic malcontents to any innovation ;

“ 4. Seductive ideas of independence of thought ; of soul liberty ; of a universal priesthood, etc.

“ 5. The passions which the Reformers kindled and inflamed, viz : intellectual vanity, self-sufficient without the Church’s help to derive the truth from Scripture ; avarice, gloating itself with the goods and treasures of Church and convent ;

“ 6. Protestantism made religion easy : no fasting, no confession of sins, etc. ;

“ 7. Remnants of former heresies ;

“ 8. The scientific contest between the humanists and the scholastics ;

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<sup>1</sup> *Handbuch der allgemeinen Kirchengeschichte.* Freiburg in Baden 1877. — See II, 378—380.

“9. Carelessness of the episcopacy and partial perversity of the clergy ;

“10. Personal influence of the Reformers, who with their popular eloquence perfectly understood how to abuse the weakness of the people ;

“11. The jealousy of France toward the mighty house of Habsburg ;

“12. Several mistakes of representatives of the old Church in opposing the new heresy ;

“13. Flattering institutions of the new teaching : the giving of the chalice to the laity ; the use of the vernacular at divine service ;

“14. Individual interpretation of the Bible ;

“15. The alluring doctrines of justification by faith alone ; of the enslavement of the human will ; of the assurance of salvation ; of invalidity of conventional vows ; of the harmfulness of celibacy and good-works ;

“16. And more than all, the violence of princes and cities, who after the expulsion of Catholic priests forced the people to hear the “New Gospel”; thus in many places the people were torn away from the old Church by brutal force. With insidious fraud Catholic rites were for a long time preserved, and the old forms of religion kept intact so that the blinded people might not be aware of any essential change in their faith ;

“17. Most of the apostles of Protestantism were base hypocrites who according to circumstances preached the Catholic or the Protestant doctrine ;

“18. In the early Christian centuries faith was propagated by the martyrdom of heroes in the true Church of God, with whom Protestant so-called martyrs can bear no comparison ; Protestantism was propagated by civil power, and at the same time enslaved and made desolate.”

## § 3.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS INTO THE VERNACULAR  
BEFORE LUTHER'S VERSION.<sup>1</sup>

"In the first place, there is a copy yet extant of a printed version so old as to have no date; for the first printed books had neither a date nor name of place. In the second place, a Catholic version was printed by Fust in 1472, nearly sixty years before the completion of Luther's version. Another had appeared as early as 1467; a fourth was published in 1472; and a fifth in 1473. At Nuremberg there was a version published in 1477, and republished *three times more* before Luther's appeared. There appeared at Augsburg another in the same year, which went through eight editions before that of Luther. At Nuremberg one was published by Koburg in 1483 and in 1488; and at Augsburg one appeared in 1518, which was republished in 1524, about the same time that Luther was going on with his; and down to the present time, the editions of this version have been almost countless.

"In Spain a version appeared in 1478, before Luther was thought of, and almost before he was born. In Italy, the country most peculiarly under the sway of Papal dominion, the Scriptures were translated into Italian by Malermi at Venice in 1471; and this version was republished seventeen times before the conclusion of that century, and twenty-three years before that of Luther's appeared. A second version of parts of Scripture was published in 1472; a third at Rome in 1471; a fourth by Bruccioli at Venice in 1532; and a corrected edition by Marmochini in 1538, two years after Luther had completed his. And everyone of these came out, not only with the approbation of the ordinary authorities, but with that

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<sup>1</sup> Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church, by Cardinal Wiseman, vol. I, p. 55 sequ.

of the Inquisition, which approved of their being published, distributed and promulgated.

"In France a translation was published in 1478; another by Menand in 1484; another by Guiars de Moulim in 1487, which may rather be called a History of the Bible; and finally, another by Jacques le Fevre in 152, often reprinted.

"In the Belgian language, a version was published at Cologne in 1475, which, before 1488, had been republished three times. A second appeared in 1518.

"There was also a Bohemian translation, published in 1488, thrice reprinted before Luther's; not to speak of the Polish and Oriental versions. In our own country it is well known, that there were versions long before that of Tyndal or of Wickliffe. Sir Thomas More has observed that 'the hole Byble was, long before his (Wickliffe's) dayes, by vertuous and wel learned men, translated into the English tong, and by good and godly people, with devotion and soberness, wel and reverently red.'"

# MARTIN LUTHER.

BY

REV. HENRY A. BRANN, D.D.,

*Author of "Age of Unreason," Etc.*

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Permissu Superiorum.

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## PREFACE.

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A DESIRE to lay the truth before many who never get a chance of reading it has prompted this pamphlet. Of all those who now praise Luther how few know his real doctrines or his real life! The threadbare tale of his having unchained the Bible is still believed. The child learns to revere him as the champion of freedom and the beacon of modern enlightenment; while the truth is that Luther and Voltaire should be put under the same blanket. Both were great literary characters and great wits; but both were men of bad lives and bad doctrines, who fawned on princes, flattered their passions, and despised the poor. Luther betrayed liberty when he urged the German princes to slaughter the peasants who had rebelled against the intolerable oppression of the nobles, and he betrayed Christian morality when he authorized the bigamy of Philip of Hesse; Voltaire betrayed the interests of his own country to Frederick the Great of Prussia, and despised the very rabble which he was teaching to revolt. Luther destroyed the authority of the Catholic Church in Germany, and thus opened the sluices to the German revolution mis-called “Reformation”; Voltaire destroyed the authority of all Christianity in France, and prepared the way for the French Revolution. The one is but a step further than the other.



# MARTIN LUTHER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DISCORDS OF A YANKEE TOWN.

WE approached it on a summer's Sunday morning, an infidel, an Anglican clergyman, and myself. The grass was green and fresh after a shower of rain. The robins hopped on the lawns, lifting up their red breasts and saucy heads defiantly at us as we passed. The June roses were in full bloom and exhaled from the gardens or the verdant hedges a sweet odor. The air, fragrant with the pleasant smell of wild flowers and blossoming fruit-trees, was resonant with the twitter and chirp of noisy sparrows and the song of sweeter-voiced birds. The white houses, with climbing vines covering them with green foliage, gleamed comfortably and pleasantly in the sunshine. The whole scene was one of quiet happiness and beauty. But suddenly, as we were viewing the scene, the sounds of many bells began to break discordantly and painfully on the ear. From the tall white tower of the Methodist meeting-house a screaming bell poured out its notes, while a sad, deep-toned bell from the slim and hungry-looking spire of the Presbyterian church thundered through the air. My Anglican friend recognized in the pleasant pealing of a chime from a stout stone tower crowned by a Greek cross the call to his place of worship. Baptist and Dutch Reformed bells had each its peculiar ring. But the clashing sounds made a grating discord. No peal came from the plain turret of the Catholic church, for the congregation was too poor to own a bell; but the bold Latin cross told unmistakably the creed

of those who worshipped under it. My infidel companion stopped his ears and cursed the bell-makers and bell-ringers for not pitching the bells in harmony and ringing them in unison. He said they reminded him of the tongues of scolding women in a dispute, or of the jargon among the workmen at the Tower of Babel.

My Anglican friend had been trying to convert him to Christianity as we journeyed along, and had half persuaded him to go to church to hear him preach on the Divinity of Christ. But the clangor of the bells ruffled his infidel temper and smothered his good intentions.

"Wait," said the infidel, "until all those Christian sects agree as to what Christianity is, and in what its doctrines consist, before I listen to your argument. With all these bells calling in different directions, with all this discord among the sects, how can you invite me to give up my opinions? You disagree in essential matters. Some of you say that Christ instituted bishops; others deny this. Some of you say that in the Lord's Supper, Christ is really present; others say he is not. Some of you deny the use of baptism and the plenary inspiration of the Bible; others assert that baptism is a necessary sacrament, and that every sentence in the Bible is inspired. I say nothing of your disagreement about rites and ceremonies, about High Church and Low Church, about your extremes of Ritualism on the one hand and Quakerism on the other. How can a poor infidel know which of you speaks the truth?"

"I admit that it is a misfortune," replied the Anglican, "that there are so many divisions among Christians and that it prevents the conversion of pagans."

"Yes, it is very expensive, to say the least," replied the infidel, who was a Yankee. "One church, a good large one, would be enough for this small town, if all its inhabitants believed alike about Christ and his doctrines. Now the people are taxed to support a half-dozen ministers and their families, and they have the expense of running all these different institutions."

"One large Catholic church, with one priest without a family, would do for all," said I.

"Well," replied the Anglican, "these divisions all arose from lack of obedience to my church. These sects are all of Puritan origin. They are nearly all seceders from the Church of England. Secession from us is their misfortune and their crime."

"Oh!" replied the infidel, "but the Church of England herself seceded from an older Church—the Church of our friend the Catholic here. If I remember history the head of the Church of England for a thousand years was the pope, and its doctrines and practices were Roman Catholic, until King Henry VIII. broke loose from Rome. Now, I cannot see what has been gained by the secession. He would have to be a very bad pope who would not make as good a head of a church as Henry VIII., the adulterer and murderer. The old man Leo XIII., who is head of our friend's Church here to-day, is certainly as good a head of a church as Queen Victoria."

"Oh!" replied the Anglican, rather embarrassed, "the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome forced the Anglican Church to separate from her, as the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, had done in Germany and Switzerland for similar reasons."

"What say you to that, friend papist?" said the infidel.

"Simply this," I replied: "We Catholics have never claimed that pope or bishop or priest is incapable of sin. We are all sinners; and it is an article of our faith that only two persons since Adam have been sinless—one is Jesus Christ, the other his Mother, Mary. The cause of sin is the abuse of man's free-will, which was weakened by the fall of Adam. By the use of this free-will a man can be virtuous and save his soul, and by the abuse of it he may sin and ruin his soul.

"It would be wrong to blame all the apostles for the sin of Judas Iscariot, and equally wrong to blame the Church for the mistake or sin of this or that churchman, or to leave the Church because of this or that local abuse or scandal. Granted that there were scandals in the Church in the sixteenth century. There are scandals in it now, and there will be to the end; for, as Christ says, it is 'necessary that

scandals should come.' God Almighty will not destroy free-will, and as long as it remains sins will be committed. But does this justify revolt and schism?

"The way to remedy scandal is not by revolt or secession, but by protest under the law, by good example, and by appeal to the conscience of superiors who have the power and of inferiors who may have the good-will. This is the way saintly reformers like Charles Borromeo in northern Italy, Francis of Assisi in central Italy, and Dominic in southern France, and councils convened by popes—like that of Trent, for instance, in which you will find so many decrees on '*Reformation*'—went about their work. The way to cure a pimple on a man's face is not by cutting off his head. Obedience to lawful authority is the only safe road to reform. The great leader of the Protestant Reformation, Luther, in the early part of his career taught this himself. In a letter of November, 1517, he wrote to the Abbé de Lenin, who warned him against imprudently assailing authority: '*I will obey; I would rather obey than work miracles.*'\* Would that he had remained true to his promise! If he had it would be easier to convert infidels, for Christianity would perhaps not now present so divided a front to infidelity and heathenism. As to what my friend the Anglican calls the 'corruptions and errors of the Church of Rome,' I merely remark that he is begging the question. The Presbyterians, Methodists, and Quakers, using his style and his principle, will talk to you of the corruptions of the Church of England. We have seven sacraments; he wants only two. We believe in transubstantiation; he believes in consubstantiation. We have pictures of the saints and statues in our churches, for we believe in art and in reverence for holy symbols; but he knows that we do not adore them, although the old hags and blockheads of the sects say that we do. We have rosaries and scapulars, etc.; but these things, my dear sir, are only the blossoms of a living faith and piety. See these sweet-smelling cherry and apple blossoms on the trees. They indicate the living sap

\* "Bene sum contentus; malo obedire quam miracula facere." Quoted by Audin in his *Life of Luther*, p. 53.

that is within ; they show the vitality of the trunk of the tree. The devotions of the Catholic Church are like a mosaic—every temperament and nation has its own peculiar tint. The Italian or the Irish peasant is fervent and thumps his breast loudly when he prays, while the German and the Englishman go to the work with less exterior display. If I thought that the carrying of a dozen jack-stones in your pocket would be the means of making you recite the Lord's Prayer twelve times a day, I would advise you to carry them. What harm would there be in doing so? Would it not do you good?

"There is no logic in throwing away certain doctrines of the old Church as errors because they are hard to believe, while others are retained because they are easy. Why reject transubstantiation because it is hard, and retain belief in the divinity of Christ? Most of those clergymen who are going to preach this morning in the various pulpits of this town, and their congregations with them, are willing to come with me to Bethlehem ; to enter into the stable ; to see the ox and the ass ; to look into the manger and admire the little Child poorly clad who is sleeping in it ; to gaze at the humble woman who is bending over him, and at venerable Joseph ; to kneel down and make an act of profound adoration, publicly declaring that the little Boy is God Almighty, and that he has come into the world by a miracle, having God alone as his father, even according to the flesh. I say that people who believe this wonderful and appalling miracle and mystery are very inconsistent when they balk at the seven sacraments, transubstantiation, and the authority of the pope. For any one who reads the New Testament knows that many passages relating to the nature and character of Christ, some referring specially to his human nature, others regarding his divine personality, are hard to reconcile ; while there is no text that collides even in appearance with the celebrated one, 'This is my body ; this is my blood,' or 'Thou art Peter, and on this Rock,' etc. If you are going to believe in Christianity, take the whole of it, as the Roman Church does, and not be picking out bits and scraps, and founding sects on each of them, as has been done

ever since Martin Luther set the example three centuries ago at Wittenberg."

Here the bells tolled out again louder and more harshly than ever. It was time for service. The Anglican clergyman did not reply, but the infidel said to the Catholic:

"Well, I think your Church has the only logical position among the creeds. She claims to be Christ's Church; and as he was God, the Truth Incarnate, and remains always with her, teaching her, she must be infallible and unchangeable in doctrine. She was in the field as the only Church for sixteen centuries before these sects; and as possession is nine points of the law, she has the best of the argument on this score. You claim that if abuses arise they should be and would be corrected from within, and not by revolt and disunion. But to me the strongest point in your favor, my Catholic friend, is that your Church has always defended the rights of reason, of free-will, and of natural virtue; whereas the Protestant sects started out with asserting the total depravity of human nature, the incapacity of reason, and the destruction of free-will. According to these principles, all the virtues of pagans are vices, and all the good works of infidels, like me, sins."

"Such was the actual teaching of the early Reformers," I replied, "and I'll show you this more at length in a little work on Martin Luther which I am now writing. In the meantime I shall pray that the grace of God, without which no conversion to Christianity can take place, may enlighten your intellect and persuade your will."

We parted while the clamorous bells were tolling; and I prayed that one day they might be all united in a tower crowning a temple of the old altar and the old faith.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BIBLE—PRINTING AND THE UNIVERSITIES BEFORE LUTHER.

IT is not true that Luther unchained the Bible. At the Caxton exhibition in London in 1878 there were sixty copies of different Bibles, in Latin or German, published before 1503.\* The invention of printing dates from the year 1423, sixty years before Luther was born. In 1456 Gutenberg printed a Latin Bible, his first printed book, at Mentz.

The entire Hebrew Bible was printed at Soncino in 1488. Cardinal Ximenes, in Spain, published a full polyglot Bible in 1522. There were sixteen German editions of the Bible before Luther's. Luther's Bible was published in 1522.

In Italy an Italian version of the Bible was printed at Venice in 1471, and this edition was republished seventeen times. There was also an Italian edition of the Bible printed at Rome in 1471. These editions were sanctioned by the Roman authorities.

In France Bibles in French came out in 1478, in 1484, 1487, and in 1512. In Belgium in 1475 an edition appeared, and another in 1488, both in Belgian, or Flemish. The Bohemians had an edition of the same year in their own language. We have English, or Saxon, Bibles of the eighth and tenth centuries. It is not true, then, that Martin Luther published the first Bible in the common language of the people.

But what about the universities and public schools? They existed everywhere centuries before Luther was born.

The University of Paris was already flourishing in A.D. 1109, when Abelard taught in it. The University of Bologna dates its charter from 1158. Oxford and Cambridge are of the thirteenth century; St. Andrews, in Scotland, is from A.D. 1411; Glasgow, 1451; Dublin University, established by a bull of Pope John XXII. in 1320; Prague, in 1348; Vienna, 1365.

\* *Philadelphia Quarterly Review*, October, 1883.

The German universities of Cologne (1388), Erfurt (1392), Ingolstadt (1472), Mentz (1477), and even of Wittenberg (1502), all precede Luther's illumination. They were all founded by Catholics. Indeed, before Luther's birth every cathedral in Europe had a school attached to it, and every diocese had public schools.

So far from Luther favoring these public schools, he condemned them; and he was especially hostile to all profane learning and philosophical research.

"Did not Luther write that all science, speculative as well as practical, is damnable? that speculative sciences are sins and errors? Did not McLanchthon," Luther's friend and disciple, "condemn public schools?" \*

As Luther exaggerated revelation, the use of the Bible, and the order of grace, he despised reason, rational science, and profane literature. Melanchthon—the Greek for his true German name of Schwartzerd—the faithful follower of Luther, sustained his master's theories. Luther, before he revolted against Church authority, was obliged to teach philosophy in the Catholic University of Wittenberg. He disliked the science. Writing to a friend at that time, he says: "Thank God! I am well; but I would be still better were I not obliged to teach philosophy." †

If Luther is to be admired for anything it is not for his love of the natural or rational sciences. He despised and hated philosophers, especially Aristotle and the scholastics. An exaggerated supernaturalism, as we shall see later, was the cause of this hostility. Therefore, so far from his teaching tending to enlightenment, he would have suppressed all books except the Bible, and destroyed art. He substantially says this repeatedly in his works.

\* Erasmus, *Letters*, Letter 59, book 31. The public schools were then Christian, not, as they are now, infidel.

† Audin's *Life of Luther*, Philadelphia, 1841, p. 22.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CONDITION OF EUROPE WHEN LUTHER REVOLTED— SOME OF THE CAUSES OF THE SUCCESS OF HIS REVOLT.

IT is not true that Luther was even the first heretic in the sixteenth century to hoist the banner of “reform.” In 1512, four years before he had affixed his theses to the door of the cathedral of Wittenberg, Lefèvre preached in France\* the same doctrines which were afterwards known as Protestant in Germany. Briçonnet, of Meaux, Farel, Michel d’Arande, Gerard Russel, and Vatable were his helpers in the work. Zwingli, pastor of Einsiedeln, in Switzerland, without collusion with Luther, attacked the old Church in the old republic before she was assailed in Germany. Erasmus by his shuffling policy in the beginning of his career, and by his sneering attacks on the monks; and especially Ulrich von Hutten in a famous book called *Letters of Obscure Men*, in which the faults of the clergy, especially of the regulars, are exaggerated and caricatured, prepared the way for Luther’s success. The wit of Erasmus and the grossness of Von Hutten, popularized by printing, made them the forerunners and prototypes of Voltaire and Rousseau. What these did for infidelity in the eighteenth century those did for the “Reform” of the sixteenth century.

Common people have very little logic. They are apt to judge all by the vices of a few. They are not able to separate the man from his system. They are prone to blame the twelve apostles for the crime of Judas Iscariot. A few public scandals often bring discredit on a whole body of men. Suspicion falls on all because a few have fallen. By appealing to this weakness of human nature, and by pointing out certain notorious facts, Erasmus, although he afterwards regretted what he had done, and Hutten, who re-

\* *Gaspara de Coligny*, by Walter Besant, p. 26.

gretted no foulness or calumny, and whose life was far more corrupt than the worst of those whom he caricatured, prepared the way for the "Reformation."

Other causes helped it. Not the ignorance or misconduct of the popes, certainly, because the popes who dealt with the Reformation were all men of learning and of virtue. They were Leo X., whom Roscoe has portrayed as a scholar, a patron of the arts and of literature, the foe of ignorance, the enemy of the slave-trade—in short, a character without a moral stain; they were Adrian VI., the pious, humble, and fervent reformer; Clement VII. and Paul III., whom all admit to have been men of great virtue and scholarship, full of zeal for the extirpation of abuses and the destruction of scandals in the Christian Church.

Italy in the sixteenth century was in the noontide of literary greatness and glory. France was on the eve of the age of Louis XIV. Spain had seen the glories of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was exulting in the discoveries of Columbus and the expulsion of the Moors. The three most enlightened countries of Europe in the sixteenth century refused a permanent residence to the Lutheran theories.

But Germany, the least civilized of the great nations at that time, gave them a home for many reasons, the chief of which are political.

That some of those who accompanied Tetzel exaggerated the power of indulgences; that the Augustinian monks, to whom Luther belonged, were jealous because the pope gave the Dominicans the mission of preaching those indulgences—these are reasons for Luther's attack on Tetzel. It was in the beginning, indeed, only what Leo X. called a "*monks' quarrel*." If the princes of Germany had let it alone it would have soon died out. But their political interests were mixed up in Luther's quarrel. Some of them took his part, and hence he succeeded.

More than a hundred petty sovereigns owned Germany in the sixteenth century—owned its land and owned its people, body and soul. The feudal system in its worst form reigned throughout. It claimed for the prince the right to regulate even the conscience and the creed of the subject.

This claim the Catholic Church never recognized. But the "Reformers" did, so that it became an axiom of German law in the treaty of Westphalia, made after the Thirty Years' War, that whoever owned the region should dictate its creed: "Cujus est regio, illius est religio." The idea of a state Church with the sovereign as its head is a logical consequence of Luther's teaching that there is no priesthood distinct from the laity, and that consequently every prince is at the same time high-priest.

The German Empire was a very loose and decentralized structure. The emperor was elective, and after his election his authority was often more nominal than real. The prince-electors allowed very little imperial interference in their affairs. Hence, though the emperor might put the ban on Luther, it did not follow that the Elector of Saxony, whose immediate subject he was, or his friend the Landgrave of Hesse, was going to execute the sentence. Very often the emperor was not able to carry out the imperial decrees, for he depended on the co-operation of the subordinate princes, who consulted their own private interests rather than the welfare of the whole empire.\*

Many of the German princes were bishops, rich and powerful. They flourished along the Rhine, once called the "Priests' Street." The monasteries were richly endowed, and the thirsty prince-bishops were wealthy. The lay princes became envious of them and often sought a pretext to rob them. The first Reformers encouraged the attempt. Luther himself urged the princes to rob the monasteries. †

After the robbery was accomplished it was very hard to make restitution. Restitution meant a return to the Catholic Church. Rather than give up what they had stolen the princes remained Lutherans and sustained the revolt which filled their coffers and freed their consciences at the same time.

\* "Only for the princes and nobles we should not remain long," said the Reformers. Walch, i. p. 244.

† If the reader will peruse Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* he will admit that it is historically true that Protestantism not only thwarted the efforts of the councils and popes to make a true reform in the Church, but that Protestantism was propagated through Germany by murder, lust, and robbery—by a practical wiping out of the fifth, sixth, and seventh commandments from the decalogue.

Germany for centuries had been suffering from Church abuses, owing to the intrusion of the secular power in ecclesiastical affairs—an intrusion which, every one knows, caused in the middle ages the long struggle between the papacy and the empire regarding the investiture of bishops. The interference of the state in the Church always tends to corrupt the clergy; and a corrupt clergy is the best material for a heresy or a revolt against authority. Although it would be unjust to say that all the German clergy were corrupt in Luther's time, yet that many were idle and vicious, and that the peasants were grossly ignorant, is historically true.

Erasmus never speaks well of the German monks, yet in his letters written from Italy and Rome, which he had visited, he praises the culture and enlightenment of the Roman clergy of the day, although Luther vilifies them. But Luther had intense national prejudices against the Italians. The combustibles, however, were ready at home for the match which he threw among them to make the great conflagration.

The disciples of Huss were still numerous, and the effects of his preaching had not yet died out. The Hussites were ready to help the Saxon monk's revolt. Many of his countrymen were only half Christian. The Prussians had been forced into Christianity by the Teutonic Knights so late as the thirteenth century, and others of the German tribes but little earlier. Paganism and half-paganism existed around him. As the Moriscos in Spain, although receiving baptism to preserve their property, were always in secret league with the African Moors and hostile to Christianity, so throughout Germany millions of half-converted and half-civilized peasants were still attached to Thor and Woden, ready to join in any revolt against the spiritual authority of Christian Rome, which had deprived them of their gods, as pagan Rome had formerly attempted to deprive them of their liberties.

The recent conversion of the Germans, and the anti-Roman spirit fostered by their emperors, not excepting Charles V., helped the revolt of Luther.

Then the schism of the West in the fifteenth century, when Christendom disputed who was the lawful pope, weakened the prestige of the papacy. Besides, many of the prince-bishops overtaxed the people and caused murmurings and complaints against the Church.

The invention of printing threw ten thousand German monks out of employment as copyists and illuminators of manuscripts. It also gave wings to slander and error as well as to truth; and we know that a printed lie travels much faster than the truth. The monks were belied by the press, and the people lost confidence in them.

Luther made religion easy. He abolished the Mass, confession, the sacraments, fasting, penitential works, celibacy, and the sacramental character of marriage.

Luther's chief political supporters, who refused to obey the imperial edict against him, were, first, the elector, John, a glutton and drunkard, with a stomach so large that he had to wear an iron belt to keep it up. He deserted a religion which required a fast in Lent and abstinence on Friday and Saturday. His sideboard was enriched with golden and silver chalices stolen from the monasteries.

Then there was Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, a notorious debauchee, whom Luther allowed to have two wives at once. The crowned bigamist became a stanch champion of Lutheranism.

Another was Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, a man so stupidly ignorant that he could never learn to bless himself. With him were joined Ernest and Francis of Lüneburg, who plundered the churches with their own hands, and murderers like Seckingen, who levied blackmail.

Really, a "reformation" effected by such apostles as these, associated with unfrocked monks and runaway nuns, has not a very apostolic appearance. To smash church-windows, to rob churches and desecrate them, to deface statues and paintings, to abolish art and spread a creed by plunder and war, is more like Mahomet's style than that of Christians who are aiming to purify a Church.

Moreover, Luther urged the secular princes to plunder, and thus won their support.

"Wait, my prince-bishops—yea, rather imps of the devil; Doctor Martin Luther will read for you a bull which will make your ears tingle. This is the Lutheran bull. Whoever will aid with his arms, his fortune, or his life to devastate the bishops and the episcopal hierarchy is a good son of God, a true Christian, and observes the commandments of the Lord."\* The man who wrote this is the saintly "Reformer" himself.

All these causes combined to make the "Reformation" possible.

\* *Luther's works*, tom ii., Witt., p. 120.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SOME OF LUTHER'S PREJUDICES—HIS INTOLERANCE—HIS HATRED OF CHASTITY.

WE have seen his hostility to universities, to the natural sciences, and to the logic of the scholastics. Some of his prejudices were intense. He was a man of fierce passions. He hated the Jews. He proposed to banish from Germany all who bore the name of Jew.\*

“In the first place, he would burn every synagogue or school of theirs, and invite Christians to help the flames by throwing in pitch, brimstone, and hell-fire, if possible. Next he would raze their houses to the ground; to sleep under a shed or in a stable is good enough for them. He would likewise take away from them their books, prayer-books, and Talmudist writings, and all their bibles; not a leaf must be left to them. . . . So long as they are with us or on our soil they must not be allowed to praise or thank God or pray. They must not mention God's name in presence of a Christian. But it is better to hunt them out like mad dogs, that we may not partake of their sins and damnation.”†

And this was the apostle of toleration!

“We should not suffer the Jews among us; we ought not to eat or drink with them.”‡ The popes always befriended the Jews, and Rome in the middle ages was their city of refuge.

Luther was a courtier. He hated true civil liberty. When the poor German peasants, led by Münzer, revolted against their feudal lords in Germany, he urged the princes to slaughter them like wild beasts.§ To the poor peasants this courtier-reformer writes: “You wish to emancipate yourselves from slavery, but slavery is as old as the world.

\* Audin's *Life*, p. 25.

† Four lay sermons, citing Luther's works, Erlangen edition, xxxii. pp. 234, 238–252–3, 259.

‡ Idem.

§ Osiander, *Cent.*, 6, p. 103.

Abraham had slaves, and St. Paul establishes rules for those whom the laws of nations reduced to that state. The rights of fishing, of fowling, and of pasturage"—denied to the peasants by the German barons—"are regulated by the jurisdiction of the country." Leo X. publicly condemned slavery.

Luther hated bishops and popes. Osiander, the sacramentarian, regretted that Münzer did not know that Luther, in his book against Prierias, had written: "If we hang robbers on the gallows, decapitate murderers, and burn heretics, why should we not wash our hands in the blood of those sons of perdition, those cardinals, those popes, those serpents of Rome and of Sodom, who defile the Church of God?"\* How Christian a temper the "Reformer" shows—as Christian as the Orangeman who shows his charity by swearing "to wade knee-deep in popish blood"!

He hated Catholics. He considered the Turks better than the Catholics. In 1520 he put a poster on the walls of the Church of All Saints in Wittenberg, in which he stated that the Turks were instruments of Divine Providence, and that to oppose them would be to disobey Providence. In 1524 he forbade the people to contribute towards repulsing the Turks. His motive in this opposition was to embarrass the house of Austria, because it opposed his "reform." Thus he preferred to see all Germany conquered by the Mussulman rather than fail to spread his pure Christian doctrines. One is reminded of the Christian inscription on an Irish town, "Turk, Jew, or Atheist can enter here, but not a Papist," in reading of the extraordinary fraternal love of Luther towards the millions of Christians of the old Church which he was thus purifying. The Turks were, in his eyes, "better than the papists," although he had been one of them for so many years, as were his parents and ancestry for centuries. But Luther acted on the principle that the end justifies the means.

Luther had also a great prejudice against chastity and modesty. He writes:

"Awful blindness, relentless cruelty of the pope! Dia-

bolical precept" of keeping chaste. "What! make an obligation of continence, which is impossible to human nature?" \* Was not Luther's mother continent for the many years of her youth before she married his father? Was not Luther himself continent the many years during which he had kept his monastic vows? If a man or a woman can remain chaste for one year, why not for ten, for twenty, for life? Is it not a gross slander on innocence to say that continence is impossible? †

To the knights of the Teutonic Order the saintly Reformer wrote: "My friends, it would be better to live in concubinage than chastity. Chastity is an unpardonable sin, whereas concubinage, with God's assistance, would not involve the loss of my salvation." ‡

No wonder that the great purifier of popery, the great illuminator of the sixteenth century, preferred the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid to the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. §

Luther believed in witchcraft and was as stanch a witchburner as any Puritan. He hated what he called a heretic worse than any Spanish inquisitor. By a heretic he meant any one who did not agree with him. His interpretation of the Scripture should be held as infallible; any one who claimed the right to do as he did and interpret for himself, contrary to Luther, was a heretic. Karstadt, Münzer, Zwingli were "fools, asses, blockheads, heretics," because they disagreed with him.

"These Anabaptists," he writes of people who simply revolted from his authority, as he had revolted from that of the pope, "are factious people, disturbers of the public peace." Luther himself threw all Germany into civil war for almost a century. "They are to be brought to reason either by persuasion or by force. . . . Should any one pre-

\* Luther contra falsa ed. Cæsar. Audin's *Life of Luther*, p. 281.

† Luther thought that it would be a prodigy if a young German should be found chaste in a city at the age of twenty (*Luth. Serm. de Regibus*, p. 193). Cæsar, the pagan, shows the Germans of his time to have had a higher standard of morality than Luther: "Intra annum vero vicesimum seminae notitiam habuisse in turpissimis rebus" (*Bell. Gall.*, lib. vi. chap. xxi.)

‡ Audin, p. 281.

§ Luther's works, Letter to Spalatin, December 21.

sent himself without the marks of a divine vocation, or the human authorization for him to exercise the ministry of the word"—the vocation and the authorization to be decided by the civil magistrate—"drive him away as an apostle of hell; and if he does not flee, deliver him up as a seditious man to the executioner."\* Martin Luther would have made as short work of John Wesley, Whitefield, George Fox, and William Penn as John Calvin made of Servetus, John Knox made of Cardinal Beaton, and Henry VIII. made of Cardinal Fisher. Alas for poor human nature! The moment a man gets the bee in his bonnet of private inspiration he finds a new sect and imagines himself as infallible as the pope. Even Father Hyacinthe, with his wife and baby and "coal-scuttle" curate, says that he alone has the Simon-pure Catholic Church in his house.

And yet Luther, the fierce bigot, the opponent of learning, and the calumniator of female virtue, is to be honored as the cause of tolerance, enlightenment, and purity on November 10, 1883! What an enlightened century we have!

\* Com. of Luther on Psalm lxxi., t. v., Jena, p. 147.

## CHAPTER V.

### SOME OF THE HISTORICAL AND MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF LUTHER'S REVOLT.

LUTHER'S two books on *Christian Liberty* and *The Secular Magistracy*, and his example, provoked the celebrated Peasants' War in Germany. They, acting on principles and texts drawn from Luther's works, claimed the right to appoint their own pastors and destroy the power of the nobles and bishops. Mobs, influenced by Luther's teaching, sacked the convents and castles, plundering and murdering noble and abbot alike. Karlstadt, Luther's former teacher, led the rabble into the churches at Wittenberg and destroyed the works of art. Münzer appealed to the miners to join the peasants. Both united and overran the country, burning towns, slaughtering men, and stealing cattle. They burned over a thousand monasteries and castles. "We are now reaping the consequences of your preaching,"\* wrote Erasmus to Luther. Münzer, the fanatical leader, openly quoted the doctrines of Luther in favor of the insurrection; and when it was suppressed by the princes in the famous battle, or rather butchery, of Frankenhausen, the blood of the slain cried to heaven for vengeance against the "Reformer." The peasants with no arms but the implements of agriculture, and the miners with their hammers, fought the well-disciplined troops of the nobles, led by the Landgrave of Hesse, Luther's bigamous friend. Münzer had promised divine aid to the peasants, and the brave half-pagan, half-Christian enthusiasts believed him. They asked for no quarter, and they received none. Münzer, taken prisoner in the battle, was put to death, but to the last moment he accused Luther of being the promoter and stimulator of the revolt.†

\* Erasmus, *Hyperaspites*, i. 1032.

† Audin's *Life*, p. 316.

Now, when Luther found that his doctrines and example were causing the people to rise in arms against the princes, with his usual character of courtier he contradicted his former teaching and came out in a manifesto against the peasants. There is nothing more disgraceful in his life than his cowardly desertion of their cause in this war and the brutality of his counsel to the princes. "Strike and strangle" the peasants, he writes. "Well for thee if thou shouldst die doing so; for a happier death thou couldst not obtain."\*

Again he writes: "Come, princes, to arms. The times are come, the wondrous times in which a prince can gain heaven more easily by shedding blood than I by praying."† Is this a reason for the German people loving so much the great "Reformer"?

He boasted that he was the author of all the blood shed in this war. "I, Martin Luther, have slain all the peasants in the insurrection, because I commanded them to be killed; their blood is upon my head. But I put it upon the Lord God, by whose command I did it."‡ Thus we see that the difference between his fanaticism and that of the epileptic Anabaptist Münzer, or a modern Mormon, who also claims direct and personal inspiration for his polygamy, is but one of degree.

A natural consequence of Luther's revolt was increased despotism of the princes. The old Church had fought the kings and emperors by excommunication and interdict when they violated the moral law or encroached too far on the liberty of the subject. The history of the middle ages is one of struggle between emperors and kings on the one hand, who either aimed at universal sovereignty, like Barbarossa; claimed the right to control the Church, like Henry IV., whom Hildebrand brought to his knees at Canossa; or who, like Philip the Fair and Philip Augustus of France, or John Lackland of England, lived in public adultery or trampled on the liberty of the subject. But Luther put the crosier as well as the sceptre into the hands of the same man. He put

\* Luther's *Sämmliche Werke*, 24, 288-294.

† Luther's works, tom. ii. p. 130. The original text is given by Audin, p. 314.

‡ Idem, pp. 59, 284.

a mitre on the head of every king; hence the concentration of power in the hands of him who sat on the throne. He united the two swords in one man's hand; hence the despotism, petty and great, of the German princes from the sixteenth up to the present century. Read the stipulations for liberty made in Catholic times by the German princes at the crowning of the Emperor Charles V., for instance; examine the limitations and restrictions of his power in Germany, and then compare them with the unlimited despotism of Frederick the Great, the great Protestant sovereign, whose soldiers and people were treated like beasts of burden. The century after Luther shows every Protestant German prince a petty czar; the century before him showed constitutional forms of government and an epoch of municipal charters guaranteeing the liberty of the people.

All the great civil despotisms arose after Luther's revolt. He threw himself and his creed into the arms of the secular power and made it omnipotent. Even the papacy, which, as head of the Catholic Church, had stood for centuries with uplifted arm between the sceptre of despotism and the rights of the people, now, weakened by his revolt, had to compromise with kings and emperors whom formerly it had curbed. The Tudors and Stuarts in England, from Henry VIII. and Elizabeth to Charles I. and James II.; the Bourbons in France, with the polished despotism of Louis XIV.; Philip II. in Spain, as well as all the German sovereigns after Luther, bear out the statement that the era immediately after the Reformation was the great epoch of despotism in modern times. Every Protestant state Church became a grinding and intolerant despotism, a tithe-pressing institution. Although *de jure* Luther's revolt and the principle of unrestrained interpretation of Scripture led the way logically to license, to Anabaptism, to all manner of disruption of social ties, to the complete rejection of authority and the destruction of thrones and altars, as in the French Revolution, yet *de facto* it was followed by the concentration of all power in the hands of the secular ruler, who usurped even the right to dictate religion and impose on conscience. War and consequent famine and pestilence, tyranny, and immorality were

the immediate consequences of Luther's revolt. Every page of history attests the truth of this statement.

The Thirty Years' War in Germany,\* the longest war on record; the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the civil wars with the Huguenots in France; the civil wars in Scotland and England, in which Mary Stuart and Charles I. lost their lives; the massacres by Cromwell's soldiers in Ireland—all had their cause in the revolt of Martin Luther.

*The Moral Consequences.*—Robertson, certainly not a Catholic authority, says of Luther: "His doctrines encouraged and his life set the example of the utmost licentiousness of manners."†

In a celebrated dispute between the Anabaptists and Lutherans at Strassburg in 1534 the former charged that the latter had no right to preach, on account of their gross immoralities. The Lutheran apostles are described as "scaling convents and running away with nuns, dancing with them in taverns, gulping down meat and wine, and indulging in all the excesses of abandoned licentiousness."‡ A strange set of saints to purify popery!

Luther himself complained of the disorders consequent on his revolt from restraining authority. "Since our devil"—he means the pope—"has been expelled from us seven stronger devils have entered, as we see in the actions of princes, lords, noblemen, citizens, peasants." "Citizens and peasants, men and women, children and servants, all are of the devil." "One-tenth part of them refuses baptism."§

Erasmus and all contemporary writers bear witness to the disorders consequent on the revolution. The schools were neglected; the churches ruined; fanaticism pervaded the people, every lunatic imagining himself as inspired as Luther to interpret Scripture and found a new church on the ruins of the old one. And this was "reform"! "O liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" said Roland, ascending the scaffold to be guillotined in an age of liberty. "O Reform, what a cover thou art for crime, folly, and stu-

\* The causes and horrors of this war may be read in Schiller's work or in Motley.

† Hist. of Charles V., vol. ii. p. 128.

‡ Audin, p. 457.

§ Sämmtliche Werke, or Collected Works, of Luther, vol. vi. p. 182 et seq.

pidity!" might Luther's contemporaries exclaim. What but immorality could be expected as the consequence of Luther's teaching that a common prostitute is better than a pure nun; that "the adulteress may be proud of her child, because she has fulfilled the precept, 'increase and multiply'";\* that marriage is no sacrament; that divorce is lawful, and that bigamy is lawful? Even Duke George, one of the German princes, wrote a letter to Luther complaining of the consequences of his immoral teaching and the consequent libertinism of the Saxons.

We are ashamed to print what Luther taught and what the duke complained of. And this was the "Reform"!

If the Protestant reader would only examine for himself, how he would despise the sham under which he has been ignorantly educated! In fact, no respectable man could permit his children to read an unexpurgated edition of Luther's works; and no Protestant publishing house would dare to print them entire in English. Decency forbids.

\* Audin's *Life*, p. 246.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOME OF LUTHER'S OPINIONS ON MATTERS OF DOCTRINE.

IMMORALITY was the natural consequence of Luther's chief doctrines. He changed them often, and generally for the worse. Thus we find him, even after he had ceased to be a Catholic, teaching that the Church is infallible, and again that she is fallible; that we should submit to the authority of general councils, and that we should not; that the state should not control religion, and again that it should. He denies the existence of hell,\* and again preaches a hell of the most terrific character. He holds that the sacraments give grace, and that they do not; that their number is seven, then again only five or three, and finally only two. He admits and denies that baptism confers grace; admits and denies purgatory; and repeatedly shuffles in his letters to the bishops, to Cardinal Cajetan, and to Leo X., writing most obsequiously to them and professing orthodoxy, while at the same time he was writing attacks on them to his friends. So unstable was he that when it became necessary for the Protestant princes to present a Confession of Faith at Augsburg the task was imposed on the more gentle and less erratic Melanchthon, who adroitly concealed or minimized in it all the Lutheran opinions, so as to deceive or soften the Catholic princes and the emperor.

Even in the famous theses on indulgences which Luther published against Tetzel in Wittenberg there are contradictory propositions; for while most of them are a covert attack on the papal authority to grant indulgences, the thirty-eighth reads as follows: "We must not undervalue the pardon of the pope, which is, as I have said, a declaration of divine forgiveness." And the seventieth reads thus: "Male-diction and anathema to him who rises up against the in-

\* In cap. ii. Jonæ, and in cap. v. Genesis.

dulgences of the pope." Luther was never logical. 'Afterwards Luther assailed this doctrine with fury, denying completely the power of the pope to grant an indulgence, or the efficacy of it when granted. Tetzel, the preacher of the indulgences, thus defines what an indulgence is: "The Church has received from its divine Head the power of absolving the sinner from the penalty he has incurred; but after having obtained this absolution he has yet to satisfy divine justice by a temporal punishment, from which the Church can dispense him by applying the merits of Jesus Christ."\* This doctor taught, as the Catholic Church teaches to-day, that an indulgence forgives no sin, mortal or venial; nor is it a license to commit sin.

It is purely a remission of canonical penance, of temporal punishment in this life or in purgatory, and never remits guilt.

An indulgence of seven years or of forty days, so called, is the equivalent of a remission of the canonical public penance of seven years or of forty days which used to be imposed on sinners in the first ages of the Church.

Public penitents often got remission of such penances in the early ages through the merits and intercession of the martyrs or confessors who had suffered for the faith, just as now the remission is obtained through the superabundant merits of Christ and the saints. These merits are in a spiritual treasury, as it were, of which the head of the Church holds the keys. "Thou art Peter. . . . Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

i. Luther's theory of "*justification by faith alone*" was directly opposed to the doctrine of indulgences. He held that good works are useless, but that faith is everything in the sanctification of the soul. His doctrine is formulated in these words: "The baptized Christian cannot lose the kingdom of heaven, whatever sins he may commit, provided he believe; for faith takes away all the sins of the world."†

\* *Instructions-Büchlein für die Prediger zur Anpreisung des Ablasses*, by Tetzel, quoted by Audin, p. 42.

† *Opera Lutheri*, t. xi. p. 172, Wittenberg edition of Leitz.

In consequence of this doctrine he wrote to Melanchthon : "Sin, and sin boldly; but let your faith be greater than your sin. Sin cannot destroy in us the reign of the Lamb, although we were to commit fornication and to kill a thousand times a day."\* The reader sees the logical consequence of such doctrine.

The Catholic Church, in the Council of Trent, condemned this error by declaring that faith is only the root and foundation of justification. The truly just man must have hope and charity as well as faith, and show forth his faith by his good works. As the body without the spirit is dead, so is faith without good works.

2. Luther denied the *freedom of the human will*. "Free-will is a chimera and an absurdity ; it is necessity that impels and governs us." These are his words.

Erasmus wrote a book against him for degrading man by denying free-will in his work on the *Slave Will*. Luther, in reply, insisted that man is like a horse in the open field : when God gets into the saddle the will obeys and follows all the motions of the rider. If God dismounts the devil mounts and drives the will where he pleases, the will not having the power to resist.

The Council of Trent thundered an anathema against this degrading heresy by asserting the complete freedom of the human will and maintaining man's power over his own acts, and moral responsibility for them.

3. Luther asserted the *total depravity of man's nature* since original sin. "Man can do nothing but evil."† These are his words. He taught that the child sins even in its mother's womb. This horrible doctrine may be read in his commentary on the fourth Psalm. Even the foetus is but an impure mass of matter which commits sin and incurs damnation. Every act a man does is a crime. Man is a "dunghill," and can only exhale impure odors. He sins even in doing good. If he performs an act of natural virtue it is a crime. According to him, the virtues of the pagans, and even of the just, were all sins ; for by the fall of Adam man became a black mass of crime, incapable of thinking

\* *Opera Lutheri*, t. xi. p. 172, Wittenberg edition of Leitz.

† Ib. t. xi. p. 172.

aught but evil, or doing aught but sin. Let the reader peruse Luther's book *On the Slave Will*, and he will find in it all these assertions, and more forcible ones still, insisting on the doctrine of the complete corruption of human nature by Adam's fall.\* Yet we are told Luther was a champion of liberty. The Council of Trent, expressing the doctrines of the Catholic Church, condemned these heresies and explained the true Christian doctrine of original sin.

She teaches that the fall of Adam has only weakened man's powers, but has not destroyed them. She teaches that fallen man can do acts of natural virtue; that his will is strong enough for the purpose even without extraordinary help from God. She consequently teaches that the noble acts of pagans are not crimes, but praiseworthy actions; as the patriotism of Regulus, or the continence of Scipio, or the courage of Horatius. She teaches that the natural intellect of man is capable by its own light, without the grace of God, of understanding and proving the existence of the Creator, the immortality of the soul, and other kindred and fundamental rational truths.

She teaches that men do not get to heaven by a mere absolute decree of God predestining a few to glory and the rest to hell, irrespective of their good or evil deeds, but that every man must work out his own salvation by using his free-will in co-operating with grace and by doing good works. We leave it to the impartial thinker to judge how much the assertion of total depravity, the denial of responsibility for crime implied in the denial of free-will and of the necessity of good works, the assertion of justification without the necessity of interior change and purity of soul, all made by Luther, could conduce to the dignity, enlightenment, and moral advancement of the human race.†

The canons and decrees of the Council of Trent condemning these doctrines of Luther prove the Catholic Church to

\* We may remark that Calvin taught the same degrading doctrine. "Out of the corrupt nature of man," he writes, "nothing but what is damnable can come forth" (*Inst. Calvini*, lib. ii. c. 3, fol. 93).

† One of the fairest, most candid, and most learned works ever written on the doctrines of the Reformers and their consequences is *Symbolism*, by Dr. Moehler (Dolman, London, 1847; translated from the German by Robertson).

have been the guardian of the rights of reason against a stupidly exaggerated and graveyard supernaturalism.

We do not speak of Luther's denial of papal authority or of his assertion of the right of private judgment \* in interpreting Scripture, as these two points would lead us into lengthy controversy. We have merely given his doctrines on those points in which his own followers nowadays are ashamed of him. In fact, before Luther himself died he found every one of his chief disciples denying his doctrines and founding new sects. Even Melanchthon in his old age began to regret his revolt, and showed a tendency to return to the Catholic Church, in which he advised his mother to die. In less than a century after Luther's death German Protestantism gave up his doctrines and ended in rationalism, where it is now.

\* The Catholic Church recognizes the right of private interpretation of Scripture, but regulates it by an external, infallible authority. Her commentators study Scripture with the torch of authority in their hands. This saves them from the license of rationalism.

## CHAPTER VII.

### MARTIN LUTHER'S FURTHER HISTORY AND HIS CHARACTER.

LUTHER was born on November 10, 1483, at Eisleben, in Saxony, thirty years after the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, nine years before the discovery of America, sixty-three years after the termination of the great schism of the West, sixty-eight after the burning of John Huss at Constance, and twenty-seven years after the printing of the Bible by Gutenberg. The taking of Constantinople scattered Greek scholars all over western Europe and caused the revival of classical learning, in which Leo X., Luther's judge, led the way. The discovery of America created a feeling of unrest and a desire for change all over Europe. The schism of the West, during which pope had been arrayed against anti-pope, weakened the respect of the Latin nations for the papacy. The preaching of Huss had left a deep impression in Germany, especially in Bohemia, where the Thirty Years' religious War afterwards broke out. The doctrines of Huss smoothed the path for the progress of Luther's opinions. The art of printing made it easy to propagate novelties and destroyed the prestige of many of the monasteries, whose inmates had been occupied in copying and embellishing bibles and breviaries, but who now found their occupation gone, owing to the greater expedition of the printing-press. The world was ripe for revolution.

Luther's parents were Hans and Margaret. Hans had to fly from his native place, Möhra, for having killed a fellow-peasant. Martin went to school for a time at Eisenach, where his fine singing won for him the interest of Mrs. Cotta, who bought him a flute and a guitar and helped him to pursue his studies. From Eisenach he went to Erfurt, where he was graduated in philosophy at the age of twenty-two. It was at this time that his friend Alexis was killed beside him by a thunderbolt. Immediately, struck with terror,

Luther fled to a monastery of the Augustinians.\* The monks finished his education and made him a great scholar, just as they made scholars of Hutten, Melanchthon, and Erasmus. These learned men afterwards forgot what they owed to the monks, as Voltaire forgot what he owed to the Jesuits. Ingratitude is the same in all ages. In 1506 Luther said his first Mass. On that occasion he wrote to John Braun, of Eisenach : "To-day I will say my first Mass. Come to it. Poor young man! unworthy sinner! God, in the treasures of his mercy, has vouchsafed to call me to his service. I will endeavor to make myself worthy of his bounty. Pray for me, my dear Braun, that my sacrifice may be agreeable in the sight of God." For fifteen years Luther said Mass fervently, obedient to the laws of the Catholic Church and accepting all her doctrines. He trembled with terror while saying his first Mass.†

Luther was made a doctor and became professor of philosophy in the University of Wittenberg in 1508, but he preferred Scripture and theology. Through the influence of Staupitz, the superior of the Augustinians, he was appointed city preacher in Wittenberg, where for years his eloquence drew crowds, especially by its novelty in attacking Aristotle, then the great authority in the schools, both for logic and metaphysics.

Pope Leo X. having commissioned the Dominican monk Tetzel and his companions to preach indulgences in Germany, the alms for which were to be used in building St. Peter's at Rome, the Augustinians were jealous that the honor was not conferred on their order; and as some of the Dominican preachers made mistakes in preaching, and the people exaggerated the power of the indulgences, Luther attacked them boldly, and was encouraged even by Erasmus and other leaders then unfriendly to the monks. All the "humanists," as they were called, or patrons of profane learning, and many of the German nobles, applauded the boldness of Luther. He published ninety-two theses against Tetzel in

\* When Luther wanted to save his soul he fled to a monastery, because he believed, as all Germany did then, that a monastery was a place of holiness. This act of his shows the esteem in which the monasteries were then held by public opinion, and is an answer to their slanderers.

† Martin Luther's *Leben*, von Gustav Pfizer, Stuttgart, 1836.

A.D. 1517. Then a fierce theological controversy began, with Luther on one side and Eck, chancellor of the University of Ingolstadt, on the other. All Germany was excited. Luther shouted "Reform!" and, as there were abuses, many leading Catholics, not knowing how far he would go, sympathized with him.

But Luther now proceeded to assail doctrines of the Church. He was summoned to Rome. He wrote an apology to the pope, protesting his orthodoxy. Then he retracted it. Cardinal Cajetan, one of the most liberal and cultivated men of the age, was appointed by Leo X. to hear Luther's case at Augsburg. Luther, in the interview with the cardinal, trimmed his doctrines and wrote an abject apology, in which he says: "I have been violent and hostile, and have spoken irreverently of the pope. . . . I am affected and penitent, and ask for pardon."\* In 1519 he had a famous dispute with Eck at Leipsic. At this time Luther was very thin. He afterwards became fat and gross-looking, as his portraits show. As Luther, after this controversy, abuses in the strongest style his adversary, we suspect the loss of temper was in consequence of defeat, for Eck was a logical and a famous controversialist. After this the Reformer became more radical and began to call the pope Antichrist. Leo X. excommunicated him in a learned document written in most beautiful Latin, showing that ignorance did not reign at Rome. Luther publicly burned the bull at Wittenberg on December 10, A.D. 1520. The die was cast. The Rubicon was passed.

Politics had been interested in Luther's work from the beginning. Germany was divided into two factions. Charles V., the emperor, summoned the unruly monk to the Diet of Worms. He appeared, but, encouraged and sustained by the Lutheran princes, he refused to retract. Franz von Sickingen promised his sword; other princes followed this example. Luther was condemned, but sought refuge in the old castle of Wartburg on the Rhine. Here he lived for a year in seclusion, and, by his own testimony, holding frequent disputes with the devil, who persuaded him to abolish

the Mass. It was then he said that "the devil is the best theologian," and that the reason why Zwingli, Bucer, and Cœlalampadius never understood the Scripture was "because they never had to dispute with the devil; for when we have not the devil on our back we are but pitiful theologians."\*

At this time, judging from Luther's language, he must have been partially insane. Solitude made his imagination flighty. In 1522 a revolt against himself broke out. Karlstadt, Münzer, and Storck began to teach new doctrines. The Protestants became divided. While in the Wartburg Luther, aided by Melanchthon, translated the Bible. His translation is full of errors. He twisted the texts to suit his views, and frequently mistranslated on purpose. His translation has now little value. In 1836 some Protestant consistories in Germany expressed a wish for a complete revision of it. Since the criticisms of the rationalists Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Semler, Bauer, Strauss, and Paulus, there is not a text of the whole Bible which has not been plucked to pieces in Germany. Even the first text of Genesis has been variously translated by these scholars, some of whom deny that the dogma of creation is expressed in it. Such is the consequence of Luther's principle of private judgment—a principle which logically and practically leads to complete disintegration and dissolution. German Protestantism since Luther's day has been an iceberg gradually melting away under the heat of discussion.

In 1525 Luther, at the age of forty-two, publicly broke his monastic vows and married a runaway nun named Catharine Bora. This act created a great laugh at Luther's expense. It was then that Erasmus expressed the sneer that "Protestantism is like a comedy: it always ends in a marriage." It is more than probable that he had privately broken them before, for authorities exist to show that his public marriage to Bora was simply an act of reparation.† The monks, ridiculed by Luther and Hutten, had

\* The original words of this text, from Luther's work *De Verbo Dei*, may be read in Audin's *Life of Luther*, p. 187.

† Philadelphia Quarterly Review, article "Martin Luther," October, 1883.

now their revenge. Comic songs were written about the marriage; proverbs expressing Luther's practical theology became current. Here are three specimens still current in Germany :

## I.

“Wer liebt nicht *Wein, Weiber und Gesang*  
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.” \*

## II.

“Martinus hat gerathen,  
Das Ri, Ra Ritz,  
Man soll die Pfaffen brathen,  
Das Ri, Ra Ritz.  
Die Mönchen unterschiren,  
*Die Nonn in's Frei-Haus führen.*”

Here is Luther's prayer:

## III.

“Gott durch deine Güte  
Bescher uns Kleider und Hüte,  
Auch Mäntel und Röcke,  
Fette Kälber und Böcke,  
Ochsen Schaaf und Rinder,  
*Viel Weiber, wenig Kinder.*”

Catharine had been originally carried off at the age of twenty-six from the convent of Nimptsch by Leonard Koeppe, a young senator of Torgau, who gave her up to Luther. The Reformer was not very happy, for Catharine was a shrew.

In vain did Charles V., at the Diet of Augsburg, A.D. 1530, try to reclaim him and suppress Lutheranism. The princes were divided. German religious unity was completely destroyed. In vain did the gentle Pope Clement VII. use his influence. The Lutheran princes stood in the way. To keep them on his side Luther was willing to grant them everything—Church goods and even a plurality of wives. We have already seen some of his opinions on these subjects. But a few years before his death he sanctioned the bigamy of Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse. This licentious prince, who,

\* “Who loves not woman, wine, and song  
Remains a fool his whole life long.”

after having been as many years married as Luther was a good priest—namely, fifteen—then grew tired of his lawful wife, Christina, to whom, indeed, he had never been faithful, and fell in love with Margaret de Saal. He asked permission from the Wittenberg Reformers to marry her. Their consent was given in a document signed by Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, Corvin, Leningen, Vinfert, and Melanther, all Lutheran preachers.\*

Luther's health now began to fail. As he grew older he became more irritable and dogmatic. Everything annoyed him. Some of his children died, and he felt the loss bitterly. He still preached, however, with his usual violence. At length he took to his bed, where, after drinking a potion of brandy and ground pepper, he died at Eisleben, February 18, 1546.

Thus ended the career of that extraordinary man who had rebelled against the Catholic Church on the ground that her doctrines were contrary to Scripture, which he claimed the right for every man to interpret for himself, and yet of which he said a short time before his death : “It is no trifle to understand the Scriptures. Five years' hard labor will be required to understand Virgil's *Georgics*; twenty years' experience to be master of Cicero's epistles; and a hundred years' intercourse with the prophets Elias, Eliseus, John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles in order to know the Scriptures. Poor human nature!”†

Thus died a man who, no doubt, loved Germany and desired the welfare of his fatherland, and yet who sowed the seeds of division which brought upon his country the longest war in the history of the world, the consequences of which are thus stated by a distinguished writer, a champion of the Protestant cause: It was “a devastating war of thirty years, which depopulated territories, destroyed harvests, and laid villages and cities in ashes from the interior of Bohemia to the mouth of the Schelde, from the banks of the Po to the shores of the German Ocean; a war in which many thousands of combatants perished, and which extinguished the

\* Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations*, p. 306. He gives the document.

† *Colloq. Mens.*, f. 4, apud Audin, p. 491.

sparks of civilization in Germany for half a century, and reduced the reviving morality of the people to the condition of former barbarian wildness." \* In fact, Luther destroyed everything hitherto held sacred. His own work is now undermined by rationalism. He built up nothing. No good work, no great institution, bears his name. He divided and consequently weakened Christianity.

Mr. Carlyle paints him as a man of wonderful courage for venturing to beard the Emperor Charles V. at the Diet of Worms; † and Mr. Froude says "his appearance there is one of the finest, if not the very finest scene in human history." "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof-tiles, I would on," Luther is represented as saying. But when he boasted in this style he had the emperor's *safe-conduct* in his pocket, and the full assurance of the support of all the Lutheran princes. It was easy to boast when ten thousand swords were ready to leap from their scabbards in his defence. When the occasion required true courage Luther failed. When the pestilence appeared among his flock after his apostasy he was afraid of it and shirked his duty like a hireling. "It is enough," said he, "that the people, during the plague, publicly receive the body of Jesus four times in the year; the Church is not a slave. To give the sacrament to whoever approaches the holy table, especially in time of pestilence, would be too great a burden to impose on the minister." ‡ No true Catholic priest would dare to use such language. Luther, when he was faithful to his vows, had spoken differently and refused to fly from his post in time of pestilence; but heresy and "hirelings" go together.

The motive of Luther's revolt was pride rather than reform. Luther defended the vice of which he was accused by his Catholic opponents. "Pride! pride! But without pride is it possible to attempt anything new? . . . I will have no absurd humility—that is, no hypocrisy. I have nothing to do with the counsels of others." § Indeed, Luther was so self-willed and proud that no entreaty or advice of

\* Schiller's *Geschichte des dreißigjährigen Kriegs*, Stuttgart edition, vierter Band, p. 204.

† "Luther's Psalm," *Fraser's Magazine*, 1831.

‡ Michelet, *Memoirs of Luther*, t. xi. p. 342.

§ Audin's *Life*. The original words are given, p. 61.

friend or well-wisher had any influence over him. He was ever arrogant, imperious, and boastful. Pride as well as the *safe-conduct* sustained him at Worms; and the pride and vanity of a self-opinionated and despotic man run through his whole life.

It was quite natural that a man who was led by pride should reject frequent prayer. The Catholic Church teaches that true spirituality depends on prayer. Luther had learned this in the monastery. But when he rebelled he attacked prayer. "It is enough to pray once or twice," he writes. "To continue always in prayer is to show that we have not faith in God."\* No wonder the German churches were empty on Sundays under such teaching. Luther, in assailing frequent prayer, stabbed Christianity in the heart. Prayer is the sap that gives faith life.

His example was as bad as his teaching. His language was indecent and scurrilous. His discourse on marriage is obscene. The vilest and foulest words are familiar to his lips. The *Tisch-Reden*, in which his ordinary conversations are recorded, is an indecent book and proves Luther to have been unfit to associate with respectable people. No decent man can permit his children to read an unexpurgated copy of Luther's works. They reek of the stews and the taverns. Like Thersites, he heaps offensive epithets on his opponents. Any man who opposes him, whether it be Henry VIII. of England, or Eck, or Leo X., or Cajetan, or Karlstadt, or Zwingli, or Münzer, is a dolt, an ass, an idiot, a liar, a son of the devil, and other things which we dare not write. A perfect master of the art of scolding, Luther uses the language of fishwomen, the epithets of a buffoon, the foul words of the slums of cities. No writer has ever been more obscene than the great *purifier* of Christianity of the sixteenth century.

Indeed, at times he writes like a maniac, and always like what he was—a sensualist, a glutton, and a drunkard. The *Tisch-Reden* proves him to have been a sot. The public records of Wittenberg still contain the list of wine and beer sent to Dr. Martin's cellar. This is the record for the year

\* Luther's letter to Starenberg, September 1, 1523.

1525: "A small barrel of Malmesbury; a small barrel of Rhenish wine; six gallons of Franconian beer; a barrel of Eimbeck beer; wine from the city stores, etc."\* Even Friar Tuck, who certainly needed a reformation, could not swill more than the great Reformer. He spent his evenings in the tavern,† and his intemperate habits hastened his death.

Nor can apology be found for Luther's foul language in the custom of the times. There was no such custom. Neither in the writings of Eck, nor of Tetzel, nor of any of the Catholic controversialists of the sixteenth century, not even in the answer of Henry VIII. to Luther, can we find the filthy, smutty style of Luther's works, which makes respectable Protestants to this day ashamed of him and afraid to publish them without expurgation.

Truth always fights with legal and clean weapons. Error uses foul means, caricatures, lies, and satire instead of argument. Error appeals to prejudice and the base passions. Error always tries to get the laugh on her side; while truth is steady, serious, sober, and appeals to the intellect and to the nobler impulses of the heart. Error is a pickpocket and a stabber. Noble truth is the victim.

The controversies of the sixteenth century show Luther to have been a master of abuse, writing comedies against Catholic faith, as Voltaire did in the eighteenth century and as notorious infidels are doing now. Error, like the ruffian that she is, imitates the Jews who spat on the face of Jesus Christ to disfigure its beauty and dignity. Truth cannot reply in kind.

"It is clearer than the sun, and cannot be denied," wrote the Reformed Church of Zurich, of which Zwingli was the founder, "that no mortal ever wrote more foully, more uncivilly, or more indecently than Luther; and this beyond all limits of Christian modesty and sobriety." It is impossible for any one who has read Luther's works to disagree with this verdict.

Yet Luther was a great man. He had wonderful gifts.

\* Audin, p. 373.

† The "Black Eagle" tavern in Wittenberg was his favorite resort. Here for fifteen years, from 1530 to 1545, he met his friends every evening, abused the pope, and drank beer.

An extraordinary preacher, using plain, homely words that every one could understand; fervent and graceful in his delivery; with a clear, ringing voice that could be heard distinctly in the largest churches, crowds flocked to hear him, as they will still follow any sensational preacher who broaches novelties and assails what has been long established. But Luther was an indecent preacher, as witness his sermon on "Marriage."

Luther was a great and prolific writer, both in German and in Latin. Over three hundred works of his prove this. He is one of the creators of German literature. His German Bible, although now in many respects obsolete, is still a German classic.

He was even a poet and a musician—not of extraordinary power, but still of some note. It is as a musician and a poet that we can give him unmixed praise. His musical notes never gave offence. His poetry is not disgraced by the vileness of some portions of his prose. We agree with Carlyle that "Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott" is Luther's best hymn. We give it to the reader in Carlyle's translation:

## I.

"A safe stronghold our God is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon ;  
He'll help us clear from all the ill  
That hath us now o'er taken.  
The ancient prince of hell  
Hath risen with purpose fell ;  
Strong mail of craft and power  
He weareth in this hour :  
On earth is not his fellow.

## II.

"With force of arms we nothing can,  
Full soon were we down ridden ;  
But for us fights the proper Man,  
Whom God himself hath bidden.  
Ask ye who is this same ?  
Christ Jesus is his name,  
The Lord Zebaoth's Son—  
He, and no other one,  
Shall conquer in the battle.

“ And were this world all devils o'er,  
And watching to devour us,  
We lay it not to heart so sore :  
Not they can overpower us.  
And let the prince of ill  
Look grim as e'er he will,  
He harms us not a whit ;  
For why? His doom is writ :  
A word shall quickly slay him.

“ God's word, for all their craft and force,  
One moment will not linger,  
But, spite of hell, shall have its course ;  
'Tis written by his finger.  
And though they take our life,  
Goods, honor, children, wife,  
Yet is their profit small ;  
These things shall vanish all,  
The city of God remaineth.”

The manly plain chant and virile hymns of the Catholic Church, which Luther sang for fifteen years in the monastery, inspired his muse and his voice in the hymns that he wrote and sang, just as the echoes and mementos of the Catholic liturgy still linger in the best parts of Protestant worship.

Yet it is not as a poet, or as a musician, or as a writer that Luther is to be honored on November 10, 1883. It is as a “reformer.” But the word only covers something else. Luther neither privately had the sanctity nor publicly the power to reform. There were, indeed, true reformers in the sixteenth century having both. They were the good popes Adrian VI., Clement VII., and Paul III. They were the twelve canonized saints of Spain, comprising such names as Ignatius, the founder of the learned Jesuits; Xavier, the missionary, who converted more pagans to Christianity in China and Japan than Christians whom Luther led astray in Germany; St. Teresa, one of the most celebrated of female writers. They were the five canonized saints of France, among them gentle Francis of Sales, self-sacrificing Vincent of Paul, who gave us the Sisters of Charity. They were the nineteen saints of Italy, among them Charles Borromeo, of Milan, who stood by his people during the plague, while Lutheran ministers,

led by the example and teaching of their leader, deserted their flocks in Germany. They were the other saints whose names are found in the martyrology of the Catholic Church, all illuminating the age in which Luther spread the seeds of confusion, division, heresy, and revolt. Take the Lutheran spot out of the sixteenth century, and you have an age of sanctity and true Catholic reform.

Luther's popularity is because of his revolt, not because of his reform. He revolted from Rome. He disobeyed the head of the Christian Church. He did it in the name of liberty. He threw off the allegiance which he had sworn to the Catholic Church, and rejected her doctrines. He broke his vows. He abolished the yoke of Christ, abstinence, fasting, confession, the Mass. As the "liberator" is he praised. He freed passion from restraint and from law. Hatred of Rome and of Roman restraint is at the bottom of the worship of Luther.

His apotheosis is really the apotheosis of license, disobedience, and vow-breaking; of revolt against logic and the legitimate authority of the only true Church, which existed fifteen centuries before he was born, and which will exist when he and his work will only be like a fly-spot on the page of history.

But if revolt is to be canonized, then why not canonize the first great rebel, Lucifer? He revolted through pride; Luther rebelled from the same motive plus the concupiscence of the flesh.\*

\* Given the factors of free-will, pride, and the concupiscence of the flesh, with the historical antecedents and concomitants of Luther's time, and it is morally certain that religious unity would be broken and that a revolt against papal authority would have taken place even if Luther never existed. Thus even as the great *Revolter* he is rather an accident and an occasion than a cause of the revolution in the sixteenth century.

## APPENDIX.

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### I.

IN Cromwell's time a soldier entered London carrying a lantern in which were five candles. He gathered a crowd, opened his lantern, took one of the candles, blew it out, and said: "So perish tithes"; then another, "So perish parliaments." When he came to the fifth he cried out, "So perish the Bible." The people began to abuse him. "Where did you learn all that?" said they. "It is the word of God that I preach," replied the soldier. "Luther made a new religion; Calvin puffed on it, reformed it, and made a new system; Archbishop Cranmer blew upon this, and Queen Elizabeth on that again. It is my turn now to come in the name of Christ and extinguish, by my breath, all that has been written."\* This man was logically using Luther's principle of private judgment, as every Mormon uses it now, each claiming personal inspiration, as Guiteau claimed it when he shot Garfield!

### II.

As an instance of disagreements in interpreting Scripture by the first Reformers, take the words, "Hail, full of grace," of the angelical salutation. Beza translates them, "Hail, gratuitously beloved"; Osiander, "Hail, having found grace"; the Geneva Testament, "Hail, received in grace"; the Church of Zurich, "Hail, thou favored one." "Miserable translations!" cries out Pope Luther, "I salute you 'full of grace.' What German booby made an angel speak so? 'Full of grace!' . . . I have translated it, 'I salute thee, Most Holy

\* Cobbett's *English Reformation*.

Lady.' Mine is the best translation. I won't have any popish ass for my judge! Whoever rejects my translation may go to the devil!" (2 par. *Opera Luther.*, Ionæ, 1555, p. 510). But afterwards Luther translated it as it is found in Catholic Bibles. So much for the unanimity of private interpretations and Luther's Gospel style!

### III.

Fine style is not history. The most reliable historian is he who quotes the original documents, as Lingard and Janssen do, and as Macaulay, Froude, and Köstlin do not. The best documents to quote in Luther's case are his own works, which, however, no English Protestant publisher now wishes to give to the light, because they are indecent literature and would completely destroy the character of the Reformer and the Reformation.

Köstlin, who has recently written a *Life of Luther* in German, is one of a class of Protestant historians who never tell the truth when Catholic questions are at issue. He paints Luther as a model of the domestic virtues, but suppresses his real doctrines, his contradictions, and his indecencies. An American publishing house has just given us an English version of this rose-colored and untrustworthy *Life*.\* We hear nothing of the manner in which Janssen has plucked off its false feathers. In two learned opuscules, answering Köstlin, Ebrard, and other critics of his *History of the German People*,† he shows among other facts, by the original texts, that Luther was a particularist and a separatist, as were all the Lutheran princes, continually intriguing with France against the peace and unity of the German Empire; and that consequently it is absurd now to call on the German people to honor him and them who were traitors to their fatherland.

He shows also that the German people in many places

\* *Life of Luther*. By Dr. Wm. Rein. Funk & Wagnall, New York; which has no historical value, for no quotation in it is verified by reference.

† *An meine Kritiker*. *Ein Zweites Wort an meine Kritiker*. Both by Johannes Janssen; the former published in 1882, the latter in 1883, Freiburg im Breisgau.

were forced, at the point of the bayonet, to give up the old faith and embrace Lutheranism. He shows from Luther's own words that he had no vocation for the monastic life; that he was disobedient to rule even while in the monastery, presumptuous, unbalanced, and at times almost totally insane.

In addition to what we have already given, this passage, authenticated by Janssen and admitted by Köstlin, will interest the reader who may have been taught to admire Luther as the "Holy Father" of the Reformation:

"We are getting on well here," wrote Luther to his wife from Weimar. "I devour (*fressc*) like a Bohemian and swig (*saufc*) like a German, for which God be thanked. Amen. Hence Master Philip was really dead here (drunk), and like another Lazarus rose from the dead again." Two drunken "Reformers" is a novelty in the history of holiness. Köstlin, when charged with the omission of this text by Janssen, admitted that he had made an oversight! A common failing of certain historians.

But we must stop with the words of Janssen after exposing Köstlin's suppression of the truth and falsification of facts: "If I would expose all his errors and misstatements I would be obliged to write a longer work." \*

\* *Ein Zweites Wort an meine Kritiker*, p. 65.



THE LIFE  
OF  
MARTIN LUTHER.

BY  
DR. WILLIAM REIN,  
SEMINARY DIRECTOR AT EISENACH IN GERMANY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND EDITED BY

REV. G. F. BEHRINGER,

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## PREFACE.

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THE history of mankind presents us with many great names, but with few great men. And even among those that are called great men, few there are whose records will bear a close scrutiny. In most cases the character of the private man is distinct from the influence of his public career.

Among the immortal names that have honored their kind and glorified their God, stands pre-eminently the name of Martin Luther. Yet not in name alone does his greatness shine forth in splendor after the lapse of four centuries, but in word and deed, in character and influence. His private life and public career are a unit, for both were the manifestations of a sincere soul, a generous heart, a true man.

The enlightened, civilized world celebrates the four hundredth anniversary of this great man's birth. He belongs to the world, to Church and State, for both have felt the influence of his teachings. In the truest estimate of his God-given work he belongs to no sect or party, he is a man of and for the people. In what better way can the memorial of his birth be observed than by a study of his life, his character, and his works ; and above all, by a practical appreciation of the influences which have proceeded from him and blessed mankind ?

To that end this volume has been prepared : to present an attractive life-picture of this representative of the

people and servant of God. It is founded upon fact, illustrated from experience, and written for popular comprehension.

In the work of translation and preparation the editor freely consulted and, where necessary, gratefully used, the volumes of Köstlin, Meurer, Krauth, and others, in additions and improvements to the original of Dr. Rein.

But, in the words of Herder, “ Of what use to learn of past ages, to praise or to blame ? Let us remember Luther’s method of thought, his plain hints and his strong truths, and let us apply them to our own times ! ” In this spirit this book is sent out on its mission.

G. F. B.

BROOKLYN, October 31, 1883.

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# THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### AGAINST INDULGENCES.

It was the 31st of October, 1517. The evening mists had already settled down upon the city of Wittenberg and upon the river Elbe, flowing close by. The city itself was yet alive with activity ; for to-morrow, the first of November, being All Saints' day, would be celebrated as the anniversary of the consecration of the Castle C<sup>t</sup> ch. A multitude of people, clergymen and laymen, had congregated in the place. In dense groups they stood along the street leading from the market-place to the castle and awaited the beginning of evening service. But before the bells announced the same, there pressed through the scattered crowds, with rapid strides, an Augustinian monk, pursuing his course directly to the chief entrance of the Castle Church. Here he paused, and drawing from his dark cloak a closely written document, he nailed it to the church door. Then he disappeared within the entrance leading to the sacristy. His act did not excite any particular attention, for it was customary at that time, on the occasion of great festivals, to publish the official announcement of special acts, as well as of university disputationes, and to use the church doors for that purpose.

After the monk had disappeared, those standing near by hastened to the portals of the church. One of the foremost read the superscription and translated it into German—for it was written in Latin : “A Disputation to set forth the Virtue of Indulgences. Actuated by love and by a desire to bring the truth to light, a disputation will be held at Wittenberg, concerning the following theses, under the direction of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of the Liberal Arts and of Sacred Theology, and authorized Teacher of the same. Therefore it is requested, that all who cannot be present in person to discuss these theses may do so in writing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.” Scarcely had the theses, thus published, been read by those nearest the door, when the evening services began and the multitude poured into the church.

Not long thereafter, the same Augustinian monk that had nailed the Latin theses to the church door stood in the pulpit and preached upon the festival <sup>of</sup> *Christ*, Luke 19 : 1, etc., which records the history of *Zacchæus*. Reverently did the congregation listen to the simple, calm, and heartfelt sermon of the Augustinian monk. “Christ must become everything to us,” he said ; “and unto those to whom Christ is something, all else will be nothing. He must be sought with a heart which, with a feeling of its unworthiness, does not dare to invite Him, but which, for that very reason, most urgently implores His presence. Such a request, coming from the heart, God will grant. Thus He would have our hearts. And thus every feast of dedication should not be merely an outward consecration of a church, but rather a consecration of the heart unto God.” Then the monk spoke concerning the display of the traffic with indulgences which was approaching the gates of

Wittenberg. He said but little, however, about this matter, and that without vehemence. "The fault of man," he continued, "to seek his own instead of Christ, and to seek his own even in Christ, is universal; but especially at this time, when seductive preachers of indulgences endeavor to encourage this error." Then he explained to the congregation the difference between spiritual repentance and sacramental repentance, including private confession and church penances. He instructed his hearers that indulgences could refer only to the performance of penance. At the close, he warned them against the error of an imaginary repentance, in feeling sorrow over an imposed penance instead of over the committed sin itself; and that they should not allow themselves to be deceived by the venders of indulgences, so as to be deprived of the salutary effects of punishment in the performance of penance.

This warning against the preachers of indulgences was justified by good reasons. For in the neighborhood of Wittenberg, at the town of Jüterbock, Tetzel, a Dominican monk, carried on his traffic. There were lively times at that place, as at an annual fair and market. The people danced and caroused, rejoicing that they were rid of their sins. And large multitudes flocked from Wittenberg to patronize Tetzel.

The following circumstances led to the traffic in indulgences. The Roman Catholic Church maintained that the saints, during their life on earth, had accumulated a treasury of merit because of their good works; that they had done more good than they were obliged to do. This surplus might be used for the benefit of sinful men who had accomplished less good than was needed for their salvation. The Pope claimed that he had received authority from God to draw from this reservoir

of merit, and to apply it to those who had shown themselves worthy by their sorrow and repentance. But soon sorrow and repentance were dispensed with, and matters were satisfactorily arranged by the use of money. Thus arose the so-called traffic in indulgences, which proved to be a source of great revenue to the popes. This was the case under Leo X., who at this time occupied the papal chair. He was a descendant of the famous family of the Medici of Florence. He loved science and art, learning and poetry, as well as splendor and gayety. As for religion, he was not much concerned about it ; for otherwise how could he have used it merely as a source of revenue ?

After the example of his predecessor, Julius II.,\* Pope Leo X.† turned the faith of Christian believers in the virtue of indulgences to profitable account by offering this new means of grace for sale, especially in Germany. Resistance to Turkish dominion, which under the powerful influence of the then reigning sultan threatened the overthrow of Christianized Europe, afforded a good pretext. And yet, as touching a war with Turkey, it was a vain pretence. For none of the popes ever seriously entertained this idea, but used it as a cloak to conceal their project of despoiling German lands of their money by means of indulgences. The completion of St. Peter's Church at Rome seems to have been a more serious matter to Pope Leo. In order to acquire the necessary means for this grandest of all buildings in

\* Julius II. was born in 1441, and died in 1513. He was chosen Pope in 1503. He laid the corner-stone of St. Peter's Church.

† Leo X. was born in 1475, and died in 1521. He was elected to succeed Julius II. on the 11th of March, 1513. He was ordained a priest March 15th, consecrated a bishop on the 17th, and crowned as Pope on the 19th of March, 1513.

Christendom, he ordered the traffic in indulgences to be carried on with pomp and display. He appointed as the chief business manager of the enterprise Archduke and Archbishop Albert of Mayence, by descent a Prince of Brandenburg, in taste and life a counterpart of the Pope. As a mere youth he was clothed with the high dignity of a triple office as Archbishop of Mayence and Magdeburg, and Bishop of Halberstadt. But this threefold promotion involved a large expenditure of money which had to be paid in Rome. And the maintenance of the splendor of his court called for a liberal outlay, so that he was obliged to resort to extraordinary measures to replenish his coffers. He welcomed Pope Leo's plan of the disposal of indulgences, and gladly became his servant in its management ; for a division of the profits between Leo and Albert was a condition attached to the business agreement.

The first thing to be attended to now was to secure such subordinate officials as would understand how to carry on the traffic with indulgences in the most effective manner. And such were soon found. But the most zealous and vigorous among them all was without doubt the Dominican monk John Tetzel, born at Pirna in Saxony. His father was John Dietz, a goldsmith. As a child the son was called Dietzel, *i.e.*, little Dietz, from which arose the name Tetzel. He attended the University of Leipsic, and obtained the first degree in philosophy. Then he became a preaching friar. He had already served as preacher of indulgences, and had done a good business with the so-called papal "milk-and-butter letters." These were certificates granting permission, during the Lenten season, to partake of victuals prepared in part of butter and milk, though to do so was contrary to the laws of the Church. This former effective service

secured for him not only a new position as preacher and seller of indulgences, but an appointment more honorable also, as Inquisitor, *i.e.*, as judge over all such as presumed to deviate from the faith of the Church. And he seems to have been well fitted by nature for his calling. He presented an imposing appearance and possessed a loud, strong voice. Exceedingly well did he understand how to talk in a common way to the common people. His ignorance he concealed by his audacity, which never left him in the lurch. Nor did he refrain from falsehood and exaggeration. And what he declared concerning the effects of indulgences surpassed everything that had hitherto been said in their favor. In his addresses to the people he maintained in plain speech : “ Christ has laid down His authority over all Christendom, until the day of judgment, and has intrusted the Pope with plenary power in His stead. The Pope therefore can forgive each and every sin, whether already committed or yet to be committed, and that without sorrow and repentance. The greatest guilt can be effaced by purchasing a papal certificate of forgiveness. No crime, however horrible and inconceivable in reality, is excluded from this forgiveness. The indulgence cross of the pope is not inferior in sacredness to the cross of Christ, and hence the former must be honored as highly as the latter.” Even nature must be subject to the power of these indulgences, said Tetzel. At Annaberg, in Saxony, he declared that the hills surrounding the city would be changed into solid silver if the people would freely buy his indulgences. And whoever should presume to doubt the papal power to forgive sins, was threatened with death at the stake, excommunication, and eternal damnation.

The impression which his eloquence was calculated to

produce was further strengthened by the glorious display and the splendid festivities prepared to greet the advent of this preacher of indulgences. The region round about Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Zerbst, and Halle was traversed by Tetzel as if he were a distinguished prelate of the Church. He rode in a magnificent wagon surrounded by a mounted body-guard. He was met at the gates of every city he entered by the monks and other clergy, the municipal councillors, teachers and students, men and women, old and young, amid the ringing of bells, the singing of church choirs, and the burning of torches. At the head of the procession was carried the papal bull upon a velvet cushion and taken into the church. Here was erected a red cross, on which was fastened the papal banner. Then Tetzel mounted the pulpit and importuned the people with his admonitions and recommendations of indulgences : "Now, now is the day of grace come to your very doors ! Ye women, sell your veils and purchase indulgences with the proceeds. He classified sins and misdemeanors, and fixed a definite tax for each and all. Thus, sacrilege or church robbery and perjury were rated at nine ducats ; \* a murder already committed, at eight ducats ; adultery, at six ducats, etc. It is said that upon his treasure-chest was inscribed the motto :

" Soon as the coin in the box doth ring,  
The soul can into heaven spring."

It was the Augustinian monk of Wittenberg who commanded this sinful traffic of the indulgence preacher to cease. Yet little did he dream how great a tempest he was conjuring up ! For the Pope himself, he entertained

\*The silver ducat is about equal in value to the American dollar, and the gold ducat to about twice that amount.

the greatest reverence, and believed that he was at fault in but one thing, and that was this traffic in indulgences. In fact he persuaded himself to believe that the Pope knew nothing of the scandalous proceedings of Tetzel, and that, as soon as he should be informed of it, his righteous wrath would condemn the infamous traffic. Could he have known how greatly he was deceiving himself in this matter?

Dr. Martin Luther, Master of the Liberal Arts and of Sacred Theology—thus he called himself in the superscription of his ninety-five theses. In these, however, for the first time, he publicly attacked the papal power, so far as it, according to his convictions, intrenched upon that domain which the Lord of Heaven and the Judge of earth had reserved unto himself.

“When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says : ‘Repent,’ etc., He wills that the believer’s entire life shall be one of repentance.” Thus begins the first thesis. And farther on he shows that God alone can forgive sins, since they are violations of His divine Laws. The Pope has simply the right to pronounce and to declare the forgiveness which God grants. Every true Christian can partake, through God’s grace, of all the gifts of Christ and His Church without any certificate of indulgence. Almsgiving and domestic economy are more meritorious than a lavish expenditure for indulgences. If the Pope knew how the Christians were being plundered by these indulgence preachers, he would rather see St. Peter’s Church reduced to ashes than to have it erected with the flesh and blood of his sheep. The real treasure of the Church is the gospel of grace and of the glory of God. But, on the other hand, Dr. Luther would not suffer indulgence, as such, to be attacked. “He deserves punishment who resists the right of the Pope to

declare the forgiveness of God and to remit ecclesiastical penances. And he that withstands the impudent audacity of the preachers of indulgences should be rewarded.” “Blessed be he,” says Luther, “who does this;” “accursed be he who speaks against the truth of apostolic indulgences.” And at the close he says: “Then away with all those prophets who cry to Christ’s people, Peace, peace, when there is no peace! A blessing upon those prophets who say to Christ’s flock, The cross, the cross, though there be no cross! Christians must be admonished to follow their Master, Christ, through pains, death, and hell; and that they comfort themselves with the truth, that through much tribulation, rather than through assurance of peace, they must enter the kingdom of heaven!”

In a short time—in little more than two weeks—the theses of Dr. Martin Luther were read all over Germany. Numerous strangers who attended the anniversary festival of consecration at Wittenberg, in order that they might ~~advise~~ the many relics and other sacred treasures of the church, carried the news with them to their homes. Up to this time no one had been willing to bell the cat! Great as was the discontent at the shameless proceedings of the traders in indulgences, equally great was the fear of opposing the Pope and the Church. But Luther said: “Whoever will begin anything good, let him see to it that he begin and venture it in reliance upon the favor of God, and never upon human comfort or assistance; let him not fear any man, no, not the whole world!” Everywhere Luther’s theses found prepared ground. Everywhere they were spoken of, and with anxious concern was he regarded who had ventured upon so bold a step! Thus the name of the fearless Augustinian monk passed rapidly from nation to nation,

and many an inquiry was heard about the antecedents and the experiences of the man, who had presumed to take issue with the Pope and his adherents. Let us also review the days of his youth and follow the course of his life, until he is called to teach in the university of the Elector of Saxony, and there arises to protest against the traffic in indulgences.

## CHAPTER II.

### LUTHER'S YOUTH.

"I AM a peasant's son ; my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were real peasants." Thus did Dr. Martin Luther express himself in a conversation with his friend Melanchthon. Whereupon the latter jokingly remarked, that Luther, had he remained in the home of his ancestors, might have been chosen chief magistrate of the village, or else have become head-servant over the rest !

The old paternal home was Möhra, also called More or Möre in the ancient chronicles. The village is located in the very centre of Germany. Proceeding southward about ten miles on the highway leading from Eisenach to Salzungen, Möhra is found, at some distance to the right of the main road, situated at the foot of a hill, one of the many mountain spurs which the Thuringian Forest projects into the valley of the river Werra. The ruler of that district is the Duke of Meiningen ; in former days it was the Elector of Saxony. The village is a small and quiet place, cut off from the great highways of commerce, its most prominent building being the church, close to which is located the old Luther family mansion. The inhabitants of Möhra are a strong and sturdy people who derive a comfortable income from tilling the soil and raising cattle.\*

\* Three families by the name of Luther are still living in Möhra, engaged in the pursuit of farming.

And there it was that the father of Dr. Martin Luther, Hans Luder or Ludher, as the name was then written, resided with his wife, whose family name was Ziegler. But little is known concerning his ancestors. His grandfather was called Heine, which is the same as Henry. His grandmother died in the year 1521. Long before this Martin Luther's parents had removed from Möhra to Eisleben. Father Hans Luther, being a miner, was led to make the change by reason of his occupation. Copper ore had always been mined among the slate rock at Möhra, and to this day heaps of slate and slag are found by the roadside. But as mining may not have been very profitable there, Father Luther removed to Eisleben, a town that was then growing very rapidly. It is likely that the paternal inheritance did not afford a sufficient income for all the members of the family. Of two brothers information is at hand. One of them, Heinz Luther, was the owner of the farm and homestead.

An evil-minded, malicious report has of late years again been circulated, that Hans Luther was obliged to leave Möhra because he killed a peasant who had pastured his horses without permission on the meadows of the Luther farm. But there is no foundation whatever for such a story—even if the meadow is pointed out where the homicide is said to have occurred. The old inhabitants of Möhra knew nothing of this legend. Besides, it is difficult to see how Hans Luther could have saved himself from legal prosecution by his removal; for Eisleben was within easy reach—about seventy-five miles distant—and under the same princely jurisdiction.

At Eisleben Martin Luther was born. His mother knew the exact hour of his birth—between 11 and 12 o'clock at night—and the day also, the 10th of Novem-

ber ; yet she was not certain of the year. But the testimony of Jacob Luther, a brother of Martin, as well as the declaration of the latter, removes this uncertainty. For, according to both, Martin Luther was born in the year 1483. The house with the room in which he first saw the light of this world is still shown. It is located in the lower part of the city, near the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in which Luther was baptized on the 11th of November, 1483, receiving the name of Martin because of the saint whose fame the day commemorated. In the year 1689 Eisleben was visited by a fearful conflagration, by which the Luther house was destroyed, save the lowest story, containing the room in which Martin was born.

After a short sojourn in Eisleben his parents removed to Mansfeld, but a few miles distant, also an important mining centre. The Earldom of Mansfeld embraced at one time a large extent of territory and was a land blessed from on high, so that an ancient chronicler says : “Whoever has a residence in this earldom is accounted happy.” The little city is surrounded by hills, projecting spurs of the Hartz Mountains, and dominated by the battlements of the old castle of Mansfeld. The noble family has long since passed away ; the castle likewise has fallen into decay. Creeping ivy has woven a green net over its walls, and a luxurious growth of grass covers the courtyard. The prophecy of Dr. Martin Luther, when on a visit to the Counts of Mansfeld the wine flowed in streams, has been fulfilled : “ My lords are fertilizing well ; grass will grow abundantly thereafter.”

There, in yonder city, at the foot of the castle hill, Hans Luther established his home. And a hard struggle indeed it was for him, in the beginning, to provide for

his family. "My father," thus narrates Dr. Martin Luther, "was a poor miner. My mother gathered wood and carried it home on her back, in order that her children might be educated. Both toiled slavishly for our sakes. In these days people would not do so." But after a little while they reached more comfortable circumstances. Hans Luther succeeded in purchasing a house on the main street of the city, whose oval portals surmounted by the Luther coat-of-arms, a rose and a crossbow, and the number 1530, bear testimony to this day. His numerous family—we read of six children besides Martin—may have continued to be a source of anxiety to Hans Luther. Yet, not only did he acquire a comfortable competency in his occupation (becoming the proprietor of two smelting furnaces), but he also gained the confidence of his fellow-citizens, who elected him a member of the town council.

The parents reared their son Martin in the fear of God and in the love of good works. But their discipline was strict and severe, as they themselves endured hard toil in gaining a livelihood. "My father," relates Luther, "on one occasion flogged me so severely that I ran away, and was embittered against him until he gradually regained my affections. On another occasion my mother, because of a mere nut, whipped me so hard that the blood flowed. Her severe and earnest treatment of me led me to enter a cloister and become a monk. But in their hearts they meant it well with me, and made but one mistake, in that they did not discern the different dispositions according to which all punishments should be administered. For we ought to punish so that the apple go hand in hand with the rod."

Thus was Martin Luther reared, so that he grew up to be bashful and humble-minded. And yet love was by no

means wanting in his training. Often did he speak, in later years, of the sweet intercourse with his father, and with touching words did he refer to the benevolent love he enjoyed, even if his parents now and then went too far in their strict discipline. Indeed, the severity of the parental training sharpened his own conscience, so that he deeply felt his guilt before God, and never could he lightly pass over any sin or failing.

In Mansfeld he received his first instruction, being sent to school at a very early age. It is said that a good friend of the family many a time carried young Martin to and from the school, which was located in the upper part of the city. There he was instructed not only in reading and writing, but also in the rudiments of Latin. The discipline was so severe that Luther never forgot it. He tells of severe tortures with declensions and conjugations. "The schoolmasters in my days," says he, "were tyrants and executioners; the schools were jails and hells! And in spite of fear and misery, foggings and tremblings, nothing was learned. The young people were treated altogether too severely, so that they might well have been called martyrs. Time was wasted over many useless things, and thus many an able mind was ruined." He himself was innocently lashed fifteen times in the course of a single morning because he did not know what had not been taught him. On the other hand, he commends the use and preservation, thanks to God's might and providence, even under the Pope, of Common Prayer, the Psalter, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments, also of many good hymns, both Latin and German. And although everything was in about the same disgraceful condition as in the days of Elijah, he nevertheless calls the Pope's church or house his "father-house," which he can never

forget, because in it he was baptized and had learned the Catechism and the Holy Scriptures. He also praised the beautiful hymns which were sung in the papal church, but lamented that there were no preachers that could explain what they meant. Bitterly did he complain that, from childhood on, he had been so trained that he paled and trembled at the mere mention of the name of Christ, whom he had been taught to regard as a severe and angry judge.

His playmate and companion was Hans Reinecke, who afterward continued to reside, as citizen and overseer of the furnaces, in Mansfeld. Luther and Reinecke remained life-long friends. Together, at the age of fourteen, they went to Magdeburg, where there was a far-famed school. Thither Hans Luther sent his son Martin, because he wished him to become distinguished. Luther attended the instruction of the "Null-brothers." These "Null-brothers," or "Noll-brothers," were a pious brotherhood, banded together in a common life, to labor for the moral and religious welfare of the people, by means of sermons, instruction, and pastoral care. Luther remained but one year in Magdeburg. Why he left so soon is not known. But as his father could furnish little or nothing toward his support, he sent him to Eisenach, because in that city and neighborhood Luther had numerous relatives living who could assist him.

In the year 1498, a mere boy of the age of fifteen, he entered the city of Eisenach, where he was to remain four years. Here, at first, he had a very hard struggle to undergo. His relatives, one of whom was sexton of the church of St. Nicholas, were probably not in the position to assist him for any great length of time. He was therefore obliged, as a charity scholar, to appeal to the common sympathy of all men, as he had already done

in Magdeburg. In later years he himself says : " Do not despise the boys that go from house to house asking bread for the sake of God and singing the ' bread-chorus.' I also was one of those ' bread-colts,' and begged bread at the doors, especially in Eisenach, that dear city." At another time he relates the following incident : " It was at Christmas, and we were going through the villages, from house to house, singing the customary hymns about the Christ-child born at Bethlehem. It happened as we were singing before a farmhouse, at one end of the village, that the farmer appeared, and, speaking in coarse, harsh language, inquired, ' Where are you boys ? ' At the same time he carried with him several sausages, which he wished to give us. But we were so badly frightened at his words that we scattered and ran away, although we had no good cause for so doing, especially since the farmer was graciously inclined to present to us the sausages, and that of his own good-will. But our hearts had grown timid and fearful under the daily threatenings and tyrannizings to which poor students were subjected by their teachers, and hence our sudden fright. Meanwhile the farmer hailed us again ; we dismissed our fears, returned, and received the proffered gifts."

Thus Martin Luther was obliged to help himself since his parents could not provide a complete support. But good-fortune awaited him. For, because of his singing\* and heartfelt praying, he won the favor of Ursula Cotta, who invited him to a seat at her table. She was of the family of Schalbe, and the wife of Conrad Cotta, one of the foremost citizens of the town. He was of noble Italian descent, of a family that had grown wealthy

\* Luther is said to have had a rich tenor voice.

through commerce. The Cotta family mansion was located in George Street, on the ground now occupied by the residence of Mr. Julius von Eichel.

In the Schalbean College, an institution under the control of the Franciscans, and which had been richly endowed by the family of Schalbe, Martin Luther received beneficiary aid, so that he could devote himself entirely to his studies during his four years' sojourn at Eisenach. The names of two of his teachers have been handed down to us : Wiegand, subsequently a pastor, who remained for many years in friendly correspondence with Luther ; and John Trebonius, spoken of as a handsome and learned man and a poet. It is related of him, that whenever he entered the school-room he would take off his scholastic cap because, as he said, God had selected from among the students present many a magistrate, or chancellor, or learned doctor.

Luther, by reason of his superior perceptive faculties and of his natural eloquence, soon surpassed his fellow-students, and excelled them in linguistic exercises, as well in prose as in poetry.

At the close of the fifteenth century there existed in Eisenach three schools connected with the church of St. Nicholas, St. Mary's, and St. George's. The first-named was the oldest. The church of St. Nicholas, a Romanesque basilica, had received from Count Hermann, in the year 1208, a charter conferring the sole right and privilege of maintaining a school within the walls of the city. But this exclusive right does not seem to have been exercised for any great length of time. For besides St. Mary's, St. George's Church in the market-place established a school which surpassed the rest. Into this school Martin Luther was introduced in the year 1498. In the year 1544 this same institution was removed to

the Dominican cloister, where it has been continued as the Latin School until this day.

After Martin Luther had diligently pursued his studies at Eisenach for four years, his parents sent him, at the age of eighteen, to the University of Erfurt, in the year 1501. This institution had acquired so great a name and reputation that all others, by way of contrast, were regarded as primary schools. With joyful assurance he passed out of the ancient gate of his beloved city, Eisenach, on the way to Erfurt, little dreaming that the castle (the Wartburg) which dismissed him with its farewell greeting would one day afford him a long-continued shelter.

In the meanwhile his parents had gained the means with which to furnish him a liberal support. "My dear father," relates Martin Luther, "in love and with fidelity, supported me at the University of Erfurt, and through his arduous labors I was enabled to go there." But Luther applied himself with equal toil and ardor to his task. Inspired by an eager desire for knowledge, he devoted himself with zeal and energy to his studies. His burning thirst for scholarly learning he could quench at the source of all the sciences. His most prominent teacher was Jodokus Trutvetter of Eisenach, a man of universal information and the chief support of the scholastic philosophy at Erfurt.

At the same time Erfurt was a principal seat and centre of that tendency in the scholastic world which sought to awaken the study of the ancient Greek and Latin classics. Luther likewise deeply interested himself in the same, especially in Ovid, Virgil, and Cicero. His object in reading them was to gain a variety of information, maxims of human wisdom, and a mirror of life. He diligently cultivated the acquaintance of his

teachers and the circle of young men pursuing similar studies with himself. Among these he ranked as a learned philosopher and as an able musician. Especially did he cultivate music, learning how to sing and to play on the lute.

On St. Michael's day, in the year 1502, he received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy, which was the lowest or first degree in philosophical honors. In two years he exchanged the modest dignity of a Bachelor for the higher eminence of a Master of Philosophy.\* The talent of young Luther was admired by the entire university. It was now the wish of his father that he should become a jurist. With this object in view he began to attend lectures in the department of law. But suddenly the course of his life was turned into another direction.

\* Equivalent to our modern degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

## CHAPTER III.

### LUTHER IN THE MONASTERY AT ERFURT.

ON the 16th of July, 1505, Martin Luther invited his nearest friends to a farewell meeting. He did not intend to leave Erfurt, but rather to enter the Augustinian monastery located in that city. "To-day you see me, but no more hereafter," said he to his friends. These vainly endeavored to deter him from taking such a step. On the following day he knocked at the portals of the Augustinian cloister. His friends accompanied him, and weeping, bade him farewell. In a little while the gates of the monastery shut him off from the world. He became an Augustinian monk.

But since his parents had decided that he should become an advocate of the law, what led Luther to take a step that was not in accordance with their wishes? His father moreover was strenuously opposed to the entire system of monasticism. And why did Luther join the Augustinians?

His decision was suddenly made, and yet it had been long considered. His very disposition naturally impelled him to take this step. He treated the matter of an inner sanctification in a very serious manner, and could not content himself with outward services and ceremonies. The severe discipline of home training had sharpened his conscience. Again and again was he filled with the thoughts of becoming pious, and of fulfilling all the severe laws of God, in order that he might

atone for the sins of his life, and reconcile God, the angry judge, to himself. He indulged in subtle inquiries upon religious questions of trifling import, was much concerned about his soul's salvation, and involved in numerous doubts. These occasioned him many a temptation. And yet he could not accuse himself of being guilty of any gross sins. Although he had been a jovial young fellow, he began his studies in the morning with a heartfelt prayer and by attending a church service. He also spent considerable of his time in the library of the university. Here, on one occasion, he found a Latin Bible, a book that he had never seen until his twentieth year. Greatly astonished, he noticed that there were many more texts, epistles and gospels, than he had read in the pericopes of the church or heard explained in the pulpit. And as he turned over the pages of the Old Testament his attention was arrested by the story of Samuel and Hannah, which he hurriedly read with great joy.

About this time he was greatly afflicted with bodily ailments. A long and serious illness confined him to his bed. Thoughts of death troubled him. But one of his student friends comforted him, saying, "My friend, be of good cheer; you will not die of this sickness. God will yet make a great man of you, who will comfort many people."

Not long after this a dangerous accident befell him. He was on his way home to visit his parents at Easter-tide. But a few miles distant from Erfurt, the sword which he carried, student-fashion, accidentally wounded him in the leg, injuring an artery. While his companion hastened to procure a surgeon, Luther, lying upon his back, quenched the flow of blood. But the leg began to swell, and overcome by the fear of death,

he cried out, "Help me, O Virgin Mary!" And when at night the wound again began to flow and he grew faint, he prayed once more to the Virgin Mary. Had he died it would have been in the hope of St. Mary.

A short time after this experience he was again greatly disturbed by the death of a friend, who was either murdered or otherwise suddenly removed from this earth. Luther mightily felt, as never before, the pangs of conscience that had often troubled him. A deep melancholy overcame him. Mournfully the youthful scholar wandered about.

In addition to all this, another circumstance happened which hastened his decision to seek his soul's salvation in the monastic holiness recommended by the church. He had been on a visit to his parents. On his return to the university he had reached the village of Stotternheim, near Erfurt, when a furious thunderstorm burst over him, and he fell frightened to the earth, crying out, "Deliver me, St. Ann,\* and I will become a monk." Though he regretted having made this vow, he felt himself bound to keep it. And this impelled him to monkhood, for, as he said himself, he never could find comfort in his Christian baptism, and was always much concerned to obtain the favor of God through his own piety.

And thus, in the year 1505, he entered the monastery of the Augustinians,† an order which in Erfurt and else-

\* St. Ann was the patron saint of the miners, and hence revered by all in that section of country.

† The Augustinians, or Hermits of St. Augustine, trace their origin to Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, who lived 354-430 A.D. In England they are called Black Friars from the color of their habit. In Philadelphia they have a convent with church, and at Villanova, about fifteen miles from the city, a college with monastery.

where was highly respected. Its monks were free from the corruptions of monastic life, from idleness, hypocrisy, and other evils. They were, on the other hand, very active in preaching and in exercising pastoral care, and zealously cultivated the study of theology.

For two days Luther's friends besieged the gates of the monastery in hope that he would return to them again. But he came not. He wrote to his parents informing them of his entrance into the Augustinian cloister, and asking for their approval of his action. This the father would not give. Luther informs us of the impression which the letter made upon his parents : "My father well-nigh went mad over it, was badly displeased and would not give his consent. He wrote to me in a very plain and direct manner—whereas before this he had always addressed me very courteously—and withheld from me his favor."

About that time Father Luther lost two of his sons by the plague. His friends entreated him to sacrifice unto God his dearest treasure by permitting his remaining son to enter into the divinely sanctified order of the ministry. At last the father was persuaded to give his consent, saying, "Let it be done ; God grant that the project may succeed." But he consented with an unwilling mind, a sorrowful will, and an unhappy heart, because he would rather have seen his son become a jurist, an advocate of the law.

In the monastery every one was proud to see the youthful and learned scholar in the garb of the order, the black cowl with the scapulary. Yet the new arrival could not be exempted from any of the most menial services which it was customary to impose upon the novices in order to break their self-will and to overcome their pride. Thus Luther was obliged to assist in the cleaning of the cells.

He was also sent out with the beggar's sack, through the streets of the city, to solicit food and money. And although he himself did not feel humiliated in the performance of these menial duties—for he was inspired with a burning desire faithfully to fulfil his vows of poverty and obedience—yet the professors of the university interposed their objections. Since he had been a member of the university, they petitioned the prior of the cloister that Luther might be excused from performing such unclean and humiliating labors. The vicar of the order, John von Staupitz,\* also interposed on his behalf, and requested that he be more gently treated, and that he have time for study. And when an order was issued enjoining upon all Augustinian monks diligent reading, reverent hearing, and zealous learning of the Holy Scriptures as a sacred duty, Luther entered upon their study with extraordinary zeal. He read the Bible completely so many times that he could turn immediately to any desired passage, to the great astonishment of his noble patron, John von Staupitz.

At the expiration of a year, his novitiate being ended, he was solemnly received into the order, and in 1507 he was ordained a priest. At this latter service he again met his father, whom he had not seen since his entrance into the monastery. Father Luther had accepted the invitation of his son Martin, and was present at the festivities

\* Johann von Staupitz was born at Meissen, and died in Salzburg, December 28th, 1524. He was instrumental in establishing the University of Wittenberg, and became the first Dean of its theological faculty. He was the intimate friend and supporter of Luther until the latter finally broke with the papacy, when Staupitz retired to Salzburg in the year 1519. Here he changed his order and became Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter, in which position he died in 1524.

with a stately array of friends and relatives. Whilst at table, the young priest turned the conversation upon his entrance into the monastery, and thus addressed his father: "My dear Father, why were you so angry at and so bitterly opposed to my becoming a monk, and perhaps even now are not pleased with it? Is it not a very peaceful and divine occupation?" Father Luther then arose, and, not having changed his opinion upon the act of his son, addressed himself to the learned doctors, masters, and all others present, saying: "Ye learned gentlemen, have ye not read in the Holy Scripture the command, Honor your father and your mother"? And when Martin answered, supported by others, that he had been called from heaven amidst fearful manifestations, Father Luther replied: "Would to God that it be not a deception and a spook of the devil!" From this it appears that he had given his consent, but very unwillingly. And then he added: "I am indeed obliged to be here, both to eat and to drink, but I had rather be elsewhere."

The new office brought to the young priest new cares and new anxieties. For very seriously did he regard his vow to dedicate himself and his life unto God. "True it is," says he, "that I was a pious monk, and so strictly did I keep the vows of my order that I may say if ever a monk has entered heaven through monkery, then I also could have entered. All my fellow-monks who knew me will confirm this statement. And if I had continued much longer, I would have tortured myself to death with vigils and prayers, reading, and other work. If ever there was a man who, before the gospel was made known unto him, highly esteemed the teachings of the Fathers and the decrees of the Popes, and with great earnestness contended for the same, then it was I who did so in a peculiar manner. And with a

hearty zeal did I maintain and defend them, as if they had been so much of pure holiness, and especially necessary for the soul's salvation. And I exerted myself to the utmost to obey such precepts, and to punish and castigate my body with fasts and vigils, prayers and other exercises, more than all those who are my bitterest enemies and persecutors. Hence, I now teach that such fool-works can never justify any one in the sight of God. And so diligently did I practise such buffoonery that I fell into superstition, and imposed more upon my body than it could bear without injury to health. I heartily and earnestly adored the Pope, not for the sake of rich benefices, church endowments, and eminent preferments ; but what I did that I did in truth, out of a pure and simple heart, and with a right earnest zeal, because I thought it was doing good, and that it would redound to the honor of God."

And yet, no matter how much he studied and prayed, no matter how severely he castigated himself with fasting and watching, he found no peace to his soul. Even when he imagined that he had satisfied the law, he often despaired of getting rid of his sins and of securing the grace of God. In the hymn, "Now rejoice ye Christian people," \* we learn the condition of his heart.

Often did he engage in violent soul-conflicts. But the quiet seclusion of the cloister and his zealous study of the Holy Scriptures combined to further his spiritual development so rapidly, that the turning-point of his soul-conflicts was reached before he left the monastery. More than by any one else was he assisted in this by the noble Vicar-General of the Augustinian Cloisters, John

\* In German : "Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gemein." This hymn is said to have been the means of converting hundreds to the cause of the Reformation.

von Staupitz, who had also made a special study of the Scriptures to the guidance of his inner life. To him Luther opened his heart, and unto him he revealed his doubts and anxieties about religious matters. On one occasion, when they were conversing about repentance, Staupitz said, "There is no true repentance other than that which flows from the love of God and His righteousness." This word penetrated Luther's soul as the sharpened arrow of the warrior. He searched in the Scriptures and found to his sweet joy that all the words of the Bible agreed with the above statement; so that, whereas formerly there was no word in Scripture more bitter to him than repentance, there was now no other word that was sweeter and that sounded more agreeable.

An old brother monk also made a deep impression upon Luther with his words. When Luther bewailed his temptations, the old monk referred him to the passage in the Apostles' Creed which says, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." And furthermore, to a declaration of St. Bernard the preacher: "But also believe that through Christ thy sins are forgiven thee. That is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in thy heart when he says, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' For it is the apostle's teaching that man through grace is justified by faith."

Day and night, says Luther, the sense and the connection of this apostolic word occupied his mind. Finally an all-merciful God granted him to see that Paul and the Gospel proclaim a righteousness which is bestowed upon us through God's grace. For God forgives the sins of those who believe in His word of grace, justifies them, and presents them with eternal life. With this the gates of paradise were opened to him, and thenceforth the whole import of the divine word of salvation was clearly revealed.

This knowledge was the glorious fruit of his sojourn in the monastery at Erfurt. Besides a valuable fund of information which he there acquired, he was led to independent research and personal investigation. And thus it came to pass that John von Staupitz recommended Martin Luther, at the age of twenty-five, to a professorship in the newly founded University of Wittenberg.

## CHAPTER IV.

### LUTHER AS PROFESSOR IN WITTENBERG.

THE University of Wittenberg was founded in the year 1502 by the Elector of Saxony, Duke Frederick the Wise.\* A faithful care of his subjects, sincere love of science, and a deep piety combined to ripen in him the resolve to establish a university for his people. And first of all he was concerned to procure eminent teachers for his new institution. In this he made use of the counsel of John von Staupitz. The latter immediately remembered the distinguished Augustinian monk in the cloister of Erfurt, and recommended him to the Elector as a young man of excellent disposition and of comprehensive attainments. The Elector approved of the choice, and called Martin Luther to Wittenberg in 1508.

His departure from Erfurt was taken so suddenly that his nearest friends were scarcely informed of it. The city of Wittenberg, in contrast with Erfurt, made a poor impression upon him. It numbered but 3000 inhabitants,

\* Frederick III., surnamed the Wise, was born in Torgau, January 17th, 1463 ; died at Lochau, May 5th, 1525. After the death of the Emperor Maximilian I. he declined the crown of Germany, which, by his advice, was conferred upon Charles V. For this act he has been variously judged by historical writers. On his death-bed he received the Lord's Supper with both bread and wine, and thus sealed his adherence to the cause of the Reformation.

was badly built, and not in a flourishing condition. At the university Luther began by teaching the philosophical sciences. This was not altogether agreeable to him. He would gladly have exchanged philosophy for theology, especially for that theology which penetrates to the kernel of the nut, the flower of the wheat, and the marrow of the bones. He at once made the necessary preparations for obtaining the several theological degrees, in order that he might soon obtain his aim. The first degree, Bachelor of Theology, he received in 1509. He now began to contend against the fundamental principle of casuistry, and to search for the true and certain ground of our salvation. The writings of the prophets and apostles, which have proceeded from the mouth of God, he regarded as higher, surer, and profounder than all sophistry and scholastic theology—at which well-informed men were surprised! Thus one of them often remarked : “This monk is leading all the learned doctors astray ; he is bringing forth new doctrines, and is going to reform the whole Roman Church.”

But scarcely had he begun to teach in his new position when he was called back to Erfurt, for what reason is not known. When after a short absence he had returned to Wittenberg, he received instructions from his order to proceed to Rome. His mission was to secure the settlement of a dispute that had arisen within the Augustinian order. This was an evidence of the confidence reposed in the youthful monk.

And so Luther proceeded to the Eternal City, the seat of the head of the Church. As a reverent pilgrim he arrived at Rome, after a six weeks' journey. Seeing the city from afar he fell upon the earth and cried out, “Hail ! thou sacred Rome !” And yet he found many things different from what he had expected. His expe-

rience there made a lasting impression upon him. “I would not have taken one hundred thousand florins not to have seen Rome. Among other coarse talk, I heard one reading mass, and when he came to the words of consecration, he said, ‘Thou art bread and shalt remain bread, thou art wine and shalt remain wine.’ What was I to think of this? And, moreover, I was disgusted at the manner in which they could ‘rattle off’ a mass as if it had been a piece of jugglery, for long before I reached the Gospel lesson, my neighbor had finished his mass and cried out to me, ‘Enough! enough! hurry up and come away,’ etc. !”

Filled with awe and reverence, he had come to Rome, and had hoped to find peace for his soul. “I was one of those frantic saints in Rome ; I ran about all the churches and crypts, and believed all their shameless, impudent lies. I also read mass, perhaps ten times, and I very much regretted that my father and mother were still alive, for I should have been delighted to deliver them from purgatory with my masses, and with other precious works and many prayers.” On his knees he crept up Pilate’s staircase, the *Scala Sancta* or holy stairway, which was said to have been brought from the judgment hall to Rome and placed in the chapel of St. John’s Church of the Lateran. Luther did this in order to receive indulgence. And yet he felt, in doing such a work, as if a voice in thunder tones were crying out to him : “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1 : 17).

And yet, in spite of all the repulsive things Luther saw in Rome, he did not lose his faith in the Papacy. Later in life he used his experience in that city as a sharp sword. The shameful cruelties and the immoral life of the last Pope, Alexander, were still held in lively remembrance. Concerning Julius II. he heard and saw

nothing but what was worldly. He writes as follows: "Rome is now making a grand display. The Pope is riding about in triumph, drawn by stallions, and the Sacrament (*i.e.* the host or consecrated wafer) is carried around with him upon a beautiful white stallion!" Julius II. had already begun the erection of St. Peter's Church. Luther little thought at the time, that in a few years that very building should lead to the outward provocation for protesting against the abuses of the Papacy. His national pride was often wounded in Rome by hearing his fellow-countrymen contemptuously spoken of as the "stupid Germans," or as the "German beasts." After a month's residence in the cloister of "S. Maria del Popolo," on the "Piazza del Popolo," Luther set out on his return home. He had not tarried longer than was necessary; for, said he, "Whoever goes to Rome for the first time is looking for a rogue; whoever goes again will find him; and whoever goes the third time will return with him."\*

After Luther had returned to Wittenberg he applied himself most zealously to the study of the Holy Scriptures. At the urgent recommendation of Dr. Staupitz he applied for and received the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology. "I was called and compelled to take the doctorate, without thanks and out of pure obedience. I was obliged to assume the honor, and to vow and promise to teach the most precious Holy Scriptures sincerely and honestly"—thus writes Martin Luther.

Inasmuch as the scholastic theology then current neglected the study of the Bible, Luther directed his whole attention to the latter. He began with lectures upon

\* During his short stay in Rome, Luther, always eager to learn, took lessons in Hebrew from a noted rabbi, Elias Levita.

the Psalms, and he explained them in such a way that, in the opinion of Melanchthon, a new light of doctrine arose after a long dark night. In Luther's explanations he showed the difference between Law and Gospel. He confronted the error that men could merit the forgiveness of their sins through their own works, or that they could be justified before God through outward observances, as the Pharisees had taught. To substantiate this he appealed to his own researches in the Scriptures, to the epistles of the Apostle Paul, and to the writings of St. Augustine, the great master of his order. His interpretation of the Psalms was followed by lectures upon the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And while at work upon these sacred books, that fundamental truth, which he subsequently defined as the article of a standing or a falling church, became firmly rooted in his heart and mind.

But he did not anticipate that the question how sinful man can prevail before God and secure salvation would ever lead to a controversy between him and the Church. More and more this truth developed into a certainty, that a gracious God justified the believers by placing them in their rightful relations to Him, and by inwardly transforming them. It is faith in the heart of man which carries with it a decisive significance for communion with God. Faith is the central point, the marrow, the direct path on which the grace of God through our Saviour Jesus Christ can be secured. With this faith, and because of this Saviour, we prevail before God, we possess the certainty of sonship and salvation. Luther views the law as the substance of God's holy demands with reference to man's will and works, which demands the sinner cannot fulfill. He regards the Gospel as the joyful message and presentation of that forgiving grace of God

which must be received by a simple faith. By the law, says Luther, sinners are judged, condemned, and executed. He too had to perspire and agonize under its power as in the hand of a taskmaster and hangman. The Gospel lifts up those that are bowed down, and makes them alive through faith, begotten in the heart by the joyful message. God works in both : in the former, the law, which is really foreign to him as a God of love ; and in the latter, the gospel, his own peculiar work of love, for which, however, he must first prepare the sinner through the law.

But the more profoundly he studied the Scriptures, the more positively did he turn away from Aristotle, whose philosophy for a long time had prevailed in the Church. In this he ran counter to the controlling teachings of the scholastic theologians as well as of his former instructors.

Hence the University of Wittenberg was subjected to many a condemnatory criticism. But this did not disconcert Luther ; on the contrary, his views were strengthened by reading the sermons of the pious theologian Tauler.\* Over against a formal ecclesiasticism he found in the writings of the latter the profoundest religious convictions of a Christian mind. The strivings of Luther's soul for intimate communion with God awakened a loud echo in the writings of this pious man. Such depth and inwardness of soul were peculiar to Luther. His first publication was a tract, entitled "German Theology," which he issued in 1516 and again in 1518. His

\* John Tauler, a German mystic, was born in Strasburg in 1290, and died there in 1361. He was one of the so-called "friends of God," an unorganized fraternity of mystic thinkers among the clergy and laity. In his teachings he insisted upon heart and soul worship, and freely denounced ecclesiastical abuses.

first original work was a translation of and commentary upon the seven penitential Psalms (6th, 31st, 50th, 101st, 129th, 142d), which appeared in 1517.

The influence of Tauler upon Luther appears also in the sermons of the latter. He zealously contended against those who prided themselves upon their meritorious works and their self-conceived holiness ; he warned against the presumption of self-righteousness as against a most dangerous snare, and pointed out the way upon which the soul, by simple faith in the proffered word of grace, would be led to its God and Saviour. At the same time he declaimed against the practical abuses and errors of the ecclesiastical religious life, and expressed himself boldly against the lives of monks and priests, and against the absurdity of saints' legends. But the divine origin and the divine right of the hierarchical offices of the Papacy, the episcopacy, and of the priesthood, and the infallibility of the Church thus governed, remained to him inviolable. In his sermons, at this time, he still prayed to the Virgin Mary. He regarded the Bohemians, who had separated from the Church, as sinful heretics.

And yet the turning-point in his career had come. The scandalous proceedings of the traffic in indulgences forced him into the arena of battle. And the first step once having been taken, he could not retreat. For then he must defend and maintain that which he had experienced in severe conflicts of the soul and proclaimed in public sermons.

He now advanced beyond the narrow circle. With the rapidity of the lightning's flash his name was carried through all Germany, and the hearts of those who were in earnest about their soul's salvation, about their faith and their inner purification, of those to whom the indul-

gences and other abuses of the Church were a scandal and a shame, beat in unison with his own.

The Church accepted the challenge and entered into conflict. At first it was believed that the Monk of Wittenberg would soon be crushed, as others had been before him. Yet he proved himself to be a match for the Pope and the Church. Luther's own opinion upon his first step we have in his own words: "I have permitted my 'dispositions and propositions,' which I set up in the beginning of my conflict against indulgences, to see the light of day, especially because the importance and the successful progress of the cause, which in the providence of God may follow, shall not exalt me or render me proud. For through these same theses I publicly proclaimed my shame—that is, the great weakness and ignorance which overcame me in the beginning with great fear and trembling. Heedless and alone I entered upon this conflict, and because I could not retreat, I not only conceded much to the Pope in many and important articles, but I also willingly and earnestly revered him. For I was a miserable, despised brother, who at that time resembled a corpse more than a human being. In this condition did I confront the majesty of the Pope, in whose very presence the kings of this world, yea the whole earth, stood abashed, and in accordance with whose will all was done. What my heart endured and suffered during the first two years, and by what genuine humility, I might almost say despair, I was possessed—of this experience little is known by those certain spirits who afterward attacked the majesty of the Pope with great pride and boldness. But I, who stood alone in the conflict, was not so happy, confident, and sure of the result. For I was in ignorance then of much that I now know, thanks be to God ! I disputed, and was eager to be taught. And since

the dead and the dumb masters—that is, the books of the theologians and jurists—could not satisfactorily inform me, I demanded counsel of the living and desired to hear the Church of God. There I found many pious men that were pleased with my theses and highly esteemed them. But it was impossible for me to regard and acknowledge them as living members of the Church, endowed with the Holy Spirit, but simply as Pope, cardinals, bishops, theologians, jurists, monks, and priests. Hence I awaited the Spirit's coming, for I had eagerly accepted their teaching, so that I was benumbed and did not know whether I was awake or asleep. And when I had overcome, by the Scriptures, all the arguments that were in the way, it was with great fear, trouble, and labor that I, by the grace of Christ, finally overcame this last argument, viz., that one ought to hear the Church. For with much greater earnestness, with genuine reverence, and with my whole heart, did I regard the Pope's church as the true Church far more than do these shameful and blasphemous perverters who now so highly exalt the Pope's church."

Soon after this he sent his theses, and a further explanation of the same, to the Bishop of Brandenburg, and through Staupitz to the Pope. To Staupitz he wrote : "Moreover, to my enemies I have but this to say, in the words of Reuchlin :\* 'Whoever is poor fears nothing, for he can lose nothing.' Possessions I have none ; fame and honor, if I have ever enjoyed them, are only lost by him who has long since begun to lose them. But one

\* John Reuchlin was born in Pforzheim in 1455, and died in Stuttgart in 1522. He was one of the foremost advocates of the study of classical literature, and especially of Greek and Hebrew. He is said to have published the first Hebrew work printed in Germany. He secretly favored Protestantism, but never publicly renounced his connection with the Roman Catholic Church.

thing remains : my frail body weakened by constant troubles. If with craft or force they deprive me of that, thinking that they are doing God a service, they may perhaps make me poorer by an hour or two of my life. But I am content in having my dear Redeemer and Mediator, my Lord Jesus Christ. I will sing unto Him as long as I live.

Concerning his theses Luther said, some he would prove ; the rest he would discuss, and desire further information. Powerfully and emphatically he continued to teach the evangelical doctrine of repentance and faith. He denied to the saints the possession of any superfluous merit which might be of benefit to us idle and indolent sinners. But, on the other hand, he clung to a belief in purgatory, and cared not what heretics might babble against it. He had a good opinion of the reigning Pope, and hoped that he would become his patron in the conflict against the bold-faced traders in indulgences. But Rome itself he declared to be the true Babylon. For the sake of God's order and appointment, it was necessary to yield in all things with reference to the authority of the Pope, even to respect his unrighteous judgments, yet without approving them, but simply because of the general command against self-help.

But to the contrary he speaks in another passage : "I do not care whether the Pope is pleased or displeased : he is but a man like other men. I hear and obey the Pope as pope—that is, when he speaks in harmony with the laws of the Church, and when he governs himself accordingly, or when he proclaims the decisions of a Church council—but never when he simply utters his own individual opinions. The Pope alone can create no new articles of faith, but can merely give his opinion in accordance with those that have been established, and also

decide questions at issue concerning the faith.” But in no event did Luther wish to remain at variance with the Church and the Pope. “Accept or reject, grant life or death, as it pleaseth thee”—thus did he subject himself to the authority of the Pope. Deeply he bewailed the sad condition of the Church. “The Church,” said he, “needs a reformation; but this should not be the work of one man, like the Pope; nor of many cardinals, as it was in the last general Church Council; but of the whole world, or rather of God alone. The time of this reformation is known only to Him who has created time.”

Many regarded the appearance of Luther as the advent of this time. Thus a monk of Steinlausig, when he had read the theses, cried out with joy, “He is the one that will do it; he has come for whom we have so long waited.” And others said, “Now has the time arrived when the darkness must be expelled out of Church and school, and the pure doctrine return to the churches.” And old Reuchlin remarked, “Thank God they have now found a man that will give them so much of hard work to do that they will suffer me, poor old man that I am, to depart in peace.”

Others were not so confident. “Go to your cell and pray, my brother, that the Lord will have mercy upon you”—thus said many a one that thought so vast an undertaking by an insignificant monk against the Pope—of whose might and influence kings were afraid—would surely come to grief. “My dear Brother Martin,” said an aged Westphalian clergyman, “if you can do away with purgatory and the traffic in indulgences, you are indeed a great man!”

Luther’s prior and sub-prior came and entreated him not to bring reproach upon his order, for the other orders were already leaping with joy, saying that they were not

the only ones guilty of offenses, but that now the Augustinians were also in the fire and bearers of shame. Luther replied to them, "Dear fathers, if this work has not been begun in God's name, it will soon come to naught; but if it has been begun in His name, then let Him rule as He will!"

The University of Wittenberg took his part. His system of theology was the prevailing one; his lectures drew crowds of hearers.

The Elector of Saxony left the matter in the hands of God, attentively followed its progress, and neither praised nor blamed. What he recognized as good and true he was not disposed to assist in suppressing. The Emperor Maximilian, who had read Luther's theses, sent a message to the Elector requesting him to take good care of the monk, for it might yet come to pass that his services would be needed. "His theses are not to be despised," said he; "he will make it very lively for the priests."

But above all others did the preachers and traders in indulgences thunder against Luther, threatening that in less than a fortnight he would be burned at the stake. His enemies, foremost among them the mountebank Tetzel, sought to annihilate him with counter-theses. But they failed in their efforts, for Luther quieted them in a very forcible and expeditious manner. Others remarked, that if he had received a good bishopric he would highly exalt indulgences instead of rejecting them.

Luther replied, in turn, that if he had had a bishopric in view he would not have spoken as he did; for they ought not to suppose him to be ignorant of the manner in which bishoprics were obtained in Rome. He was now charged with irreverence against the Pope. This he repelled by saying, "The Pope is a human being who

may be deceived, especially by cunning and hypocritical people. But God is the truth, and cannot be deceived. Hence I entreat my enemies not to frighten me hereafter by flattering the Pope, nor by their renowned teachers ; but that they instruct and conquer me by well-grounded declarations of the Bible and of the Pope, if they are indeed bent upon carrying off the victory at all hazards."

But how did the Pope act in this violent conflict ? Two of his utterances are recorded : " Brother Martin is a very ingenious fellow ; but the conflict itself is merely a quarrel between jealous monks." And again : " A drunken German must have written these theses ; as soon as he becomes sober he will change his mind." The highest circles of Rome, and the immediate attendants upon the Pope were guilty of the same deprecative and contemptuous treatment of the Germans and of Luther's theses. In their replies the " obscure German" and his " dog-biting" theses were treated in the most derogatory manner. They viewed the Pope as the Church of Rome, and the Roman Church as equivalent to the universal Christian Church. But whoever presumed to question the right of the Church to do anything it pleased, was a heretic.

Thus were they disposed in Rome, at least in the beginning, to assume the position of a haughty security. It was purposed, in a short time, by means of the papal power, to put an end to this unruly German monk. A court of inquisition was appointed, and Luther was cited to appear before it on the 7th of August—within 60 days he was expected to report himself personally in Rome.

But before this time had expired the Pope took up other measures against Luther. The tremendous ex-

citement which the 95 theses had caused no doubt impelled him to more vigorous proceedings. Hence the Pope wrote to the Elector and entreated him to avoid the very appearance of the guilt of complicity, and to deliver Luther, the child of wickedness, into the hands of his legate, before whom he was to vindicate himself. But secretly the Elector was ordered to secure the arrest of the heretic with all the means in his power. His adherents were also to be arrested, and an interdict laid upon every place where Luther was tolerated.

But the movement was not to be so quickly and so easily suppressed as the Pope imagined. He was obliged to take into account the influential tendencies prevailing in the German Empire at that time. And these were not favorable to him ; for everywhere grievous charges were preferred, and bitter complaints were heard concerning the violent and unlawful proceedings of the Pope, and especially in reference to the immense sum of money that was annually carried to Rome. Accordingly, when in the year 1518 the Pope again desired the grant of a large imperial tax, ostensibly for a war against the Turks, an embittered feeling was manifested, and it was publicly charged that the genuine Turks were to be found in Italy ! The Imperial Parliament declined to accede to his request, but drew up a long list of grievances against the Pope : as touching the large sums of money which he collected from German benefices, and which, under various pretexts, he extorted ; as to the unlawful assumption of power in making ecclesiastical appointments in Germany ; as to a continued violation of the ratified concordats, etc.

Luther profited by all this without being aware of it. But the Pope was obliged to take these circumstances into account, and therefore to treat him with consideration.

Thus, the papal legate Cajetan\* was very careful not to increase the universal feeling of excitement in his proceedings against Luther. Indeed he promised the Elector of Saxony to hear him in Augsburg, and to treat him with fatherly kindness. And thus Luther, in accordance with the desire of the university authorities, and agreeably to his own wishes, was cited to appear in Augsburg.

\* Cajetan or Cajetanus (Italian : Gaëtano) was so called from his birthplace, Gaëta, in Italy. His real name was Jacob de Vio, but he afterward substituted Thomas for Jacob, in honor of Thomas Aquinas, his scholastic master. Cajetan was a zealous Dominican, and became general of his order. He was an able scholar, a very skilful intriguer, a haughty diplomatist, and withal one of the most prominent figures in the history of the Reformation. He was born in 1469, and died in Rome in 1534.

## CHAPTER V.

### LUTHER AND THE PAPAL AMBASSADORS.

In September, 1518, Luther set out on his journey. On the 28th he arrived at Weimar, and lodged in the monastery. On the following day he preached in the castle church in the presence of the Elector, who at that time had established his court in Weimar. Basing his discourse upon the text, Matthew 18 : 1, etc., he warned against a proud self-righteousness and sanctimoniousness, and against the accompanying vices of envy and avarice. In so doing he expressly castigated the bishops, who ought to appear in the form of servants, but who, like Antichrist, seated themselves in the temple of God, and used the imparted powers of their office simply to their own advantage.

He did not refer, however, to his own position. "My thoughts," said he afterward, "on the journey were these: Now I must die; and often did I remark, What a reproach will I be to my parents!" He undertook the journey on foot, in company with a young monk of Wittenberg, by way of Nuremberg. Here his friend Link\* met him. When in the neighborhood of Augsburg Luther was overcome by bodily weakness. Faint-hearted friends had often warned him on the way not to enter

\* Link was the successor of Staupitz as Vicar-General of the Augustinian order, and the Reformer of the Province of Altenburg.

Augsburg. But in reply to them he said, "In Augsburg, even in the midst of mine enemies, Jesus Christ also reigns. May Christ live, even if Martin should die." Arriving in the neighborhood of Augsburg, he informs us that he became very uncomfortable, that a demon tortured him with evil thoughts. On the 7th of October he arrived in Augsburg, where he was hospitably entertained, at first in the Augustinian and then in the Carmelite monastery. He was already the subject of conversation everywhere in the city. Everybody, said he, wished to see this Herostratus \* who had kindled so great a conflagration.

Luther immediately announced his arrival to the papal legate. But he did not venture to meet the latter until his friends, to whom the Elector had recommended him, had obtained a safe-conduct from the Emperor, who was then on a hunt in that neighborhood ; for the Italians are not to be trusted, said Luther. In the meanwhile a servant of the Cardinal Legate delivered the following message to him : "The Cardinal offers you his sincere favor ; why do you fear ? He is a very affable father."

An Italian, a friend of Cajetan, also called upon Luther, sent, according to common belief, by the Cardinal himself. Like a genuine Italian, said Luther, this one regards the whole matter in a very light-hearted manner, as if it turned about these six letters : *revoca* (*i.e.* recant). Then the Italian added, laughingly :

"Do you really think the Elector Frederick would go to war on your account ?"

To which Luther replied :

\* An Ephesian, who on the night in which Alexander the Great was born, in 356 B.C., set fire to the magnificent temple of Diana, at Ephesus, which was completely destroyed. His self-confessed motive was to render his name immortal.

"That I would not desire."

"And where, then, will you remain?" returned the former.

"Under the heavens," said the latter.

"But what would you do were the Pope and cardinals to have you in their power?" continued the Italian.

"I would show them all honor and reverence," concluded Luther.

Whereupon the former departed laughing, and with a gesture of contempt. But Luther's resolve stood fast; rather would he die than to recall what he had taught and written. The idea of appealing to a council, in case of necessity, also occurred to him, and was developing in his mind.

After the letter of safe-conduct had arrived, Luther proceeded to the papal legate. His friends had directed him as to the proper manner of meeting a cardinal and a papal legate. Luther prostrated himself in the presence of the Cardinal, and even after he had been told to arise he remained in a kneeling position until he was again commanded. And since neither the Cardinal nor any one else ventured to speak, Luther believed that this silence was an intimation that he should begin. Accordingly he delivered himself of the following: "Reverend Father, in obedience to the citation of his Papal Holiness, and to the demand of my gracious Lord, the Elector of Saxony, I have appeared and confess that I published the 95 Theses. And I am in obedience both ready and willing to hear what accusations have been brought against me, and if I have erred, to be informed and corrected." The legate then addressed him in a gracious and fatherly manner, and in the name of the Pope plainly demanded of him that he recant his errors and promise to abstain thereafter from the

promulgation of all views that might distract the Church. Two articles he should recall and withdraw : first, the denial that the “indulgence-treasure” of the Church is the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ ; secondly, his maintenance that a person who wishes to receive the Lord’s Supper must above all things possess the faith and the inner conviction that his sins will be forgiven him. Hereupon a discussion ensued between Luther and Cajetan. The attendants of the latter audibly tittered when they heard the explanations of the Augustinian monk, so strange and curious did they seem to the Italians. In vain did Luther appeal to the Bible and its declarations concerning faith. The Cardinal then confronted Luther with the papal authority, which was above that of councils, the Church and the Scriptures, and declared unto him, “ You must recant to-day, whether you will or will not ; otherwise I will condemn all your theses for the reason assigned above.” But Luther did not recant. He concluded the interview with the request to grant him a few days more for further consideration.

On the same day Staupitz also arrived in Augsburg. All action now taken was first deliberated over in common. Luther submitted a written declaration, offering publicly to defend his theses, and prepared to receive the judgment of the faculties at Basel, Freiburg, Louvain, and Paris upon them. Cajetan smiled at this proposal, and admonished him to give up such idle thoughts, but rather to reflect upon his course and to retreat, for he would find it “hard to kick against the pricks !” In no case would he admit of a disputation ; but he permitted Luther to submit another and a longer explanation of the principal points at issue.

This document was sent to Cajetan on the following day. In it Luther emphatically declares : that the papal

decretales may err and conflict with Holy Writ; that every individual Christian can exercise the right to prove the papal decisions in the light of God's Word; and in conclusion, Luther entreats the legate to show him a better way, and not to force him to act contrary to his conscience, for we must obey God rather than man. The cardinal legate rejected Luther's written declarations without examination, and again urged him to recant, whereupon a violent war of words ensued. The cardinal threatened with ban and interdict, and dismissed Luther, saying, "Go, and do not show your face again to me, unless it be to recant."

Thus was Luther sent away by the cardinal, who is said to have added this remark: "I will not confer with this beast again, for it has deep eyes and wonderful speculations in its head." Staupitz and Link now departed from the city of Augsburg, not believing it to be safe to trust the Italians. But Luther tarried and awaited the pleasure of the legate. The latter, however, remained silent, even after Luther had written again in a humble spirit asking forgiveness for his exhibited violence, promising to remain silent if his opponents would do the same, and professing himself as willing to recant, provided he were better instructed. But although he made all these concessions, he received no answer. And after he had drawn up another declaration, appealing from "the badly informed Pope to the better-to-be-instructed Pope," he sent it to Cajetan, and nailed a copy of it to the door of the cathedral. He then left the city on the 20th of October.

Luther's friends, fearing that he would not be permitted to depart from the city, provided for him a horse and an old companion at arms, and dismissed him at night through a secret gate in the city walls. Thus he

escaped upon a hard-riding trotter, in his monk's coat, without boots or pants, spurs or sword, travelling about forty miles before he sought rest. When he dismounted at the inn at Monheim\* he could hardly stand, and for weariness fell down upon the straw. In Gräfenthal † he met the friendly Count Albert of Mansfeld, who laughed at Luther's feats of riding, and invited him to join his company.

On the anniversary day of the nailing of the theses to the church door, Luther returned to Wittenberg amid the rejoicings of students and citizens. In the evening he sent a message to his friend Spalatin, saying, "By God's grace I have arrived safe and sound, but uncertain how long I shall remain. For my cause is so situated that I both hope and fear. I am filled with joy and peace, so that I am surprised that the trials which have befallen me should appear to many to be something great."

In possession of inward joy and peace, and surrounded by the circle of his friends at Wittenberg, Luther could now continue the conflict against the papacy. Soon there arrived a letter from the cardinal, Cajetan, preferring charges against Luther, and demanding his surrender or expulsion from Wittenberg. But the Elector Frederick did not accede to this demand. He carefully protected Luther, and insisted upon it that the controversy should be settled in Germany. Privately he felt a warm interest in Luther's cause, but desired that he should desist from further provocation.

Yet Luther did not refrain from new measures and continued declarations. He published a report of his

\* Augsburg and Monheim are in Bavaria.

† Gräfenthal is in the Thuringian Forest.

interviews with Cajetan, and added a farther justification of his procedure, in which he more positively than ever before attacked the papacy. The doctrine of the divine right of the papacy and of its necessary existence as an essential part of the Church of Christ, he declared to be “the foolishness of silly people, who in opposition to Christ’s own words, that ‘the kingdom of God cometh not with observation,’ would bind the church of Christ to time and place ; and who would dare question the Christian standing of any one not disposed to submit to the Pope’s domination.”

Shortly thereafter Luther appealed, in a formal and solemn proclamation, to a universal council of the Christian Church. By this act he forever severed his relations to the papacy. Daily he expected to receive the ban of excommunication from Rome. He made all necessary preparations, in order, as he wrote to Spalatin, that he might be ready, on the arrival of the ban, to go out like Abraham, not knowing whither, but certain that God is everywhere. In one of his sermons he said to the congregation : “I am now a very uncertain preacher, as you have already experienced, and have often gone off without bidding you farewell. If that should happen again, you may take my present words as a farewell greeting, in case I should not return.” He was prepared each moment for flight and exile. He felt also that he must withdraw for the Elector’s sake, in order that no suspicion should attach itself to the latter because of any supposed adherence to Luther’s teachings upon indulgences and the papal authority. He also thought if he remained at Wittenberg, that he could not speak and write as freely as he would desire, whereas if he departed he could freely deliver himself and offer his life unto Christ. He was filled with courage for the conflict and with the spirit of action.

"Far more extensive issues are being born of my pen," writes Luther; "I do not know whence these thoughts come; in my opinion this movement has not yet fairly begun, instead of soon ending, as the noble lords at Rome vainly imagine." "The more they rage and meditate upon the use of force, the less do I fear, and the more freely will I attack the Roman serpents. I am prepared for the worst that may happen and await the counsel of God." "This I know, indeed; that I would be treated as the dearest and most agreeable person, did I but speak one word: *revoco*; that is, I recall. But I will not make myself a heretic by the recall of that opinion by which I became a Christian. I would rather die, be burnt, exiled, and accursed."

But the danger from Rome did not threaten as speedily as was anticipated or feared. The project there entertained, of bringing the rebellious monk back to a state of obedience, had not been given up; but the time had not yet come for extreme measures.

Karl von Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman and chamberlain of the Pope, was now sent as an ambassador to Germany, with special instructions to the Elector of Saxony. In the person of the latter the papal chair recognized the secret protector of the dangerous monk. The mission of Miltitz was to deprive Luther of his patron's support, and then to lead him away to Rome.

To this end the papal ambassador appeared before the Elector, presenting him with a distinguished emblem of gracious favor, the golden rose. This was "a very precious and mysterious present," which the Pope was accustomed annually to bestow upon that eminent Christian prince who had rendered good service to the apostolic authority, the Pope at Rome. Miltitz was commissioned to present this golden rose to the Elector of

Saxony, to the intent that the divine fragrance of this flower should penetrate the heart of Frederick, so that he might receive the requests of the ambassador with a pious regard, and be disposed with glowing ardor to carry out the sacred wishes of the Pope. At least this much was expected in Rome from the fragrance of the golden rose. Irreverent wits remarked, that if the rose had arrived sooner in Wittenberg its perfume would have been more agreeable ; for it had lost its fragrance on the long and wearisome journey !

Miltitz was empowered to demand the following, as expressed in a special communication : the Elector should support Miltitz in the measures to be taken against Luther, the child of Satan and the son of perdition, because of his heretical preaching in the lands of Frederick. Messages of similar import were addressed to Spalatin, the magistrate of Wittenberg, and to many others. It is said that Miltitz was armed with more than seventy such papal communications.

At the close of December Miltitz\* arrived in Altenburg. Well acquainted as he was with the condition of affairs in Germany, he had informed himself on the way, among the cultured as well as among the common people, in regard to the popular opinion of the man against whom he had been sent. He soon found that out of every five

\* Miltitz had made an appointment to meet Tetzel at Altenburg, in Saxony, to reprimand him for his excesses. But the latter, fearing the popular wrath, did not dare to undertake the journey. After Miltitz had concluded his conference with Luther, he went to Leipsic, and meeting Tetzel he administered so severe a reproof that he sickened and died of chagrin in a Dominican cloister, July 4th, 1519. Luther wrote Tetzel a comforting letter during his sickness—an evidence of the nobility of soul and large-heartedness of the great Reformer.

persons, scarce two or three had remained loyal to Rome. It is possible that because of this discovery he changed his method of procedure, for he confessed that he would not have dared to take Luther away with him to Rome, not even if he had had an army of 25,000 men.

In Altenburg Miltitz met Luther in the first week of the new year, 1519. He addressed Luther amid tears and with many words, exhorting him to recant, and showing all possible friendship and affection. He hoped in this way to persuade Luther. But Luther did not trust him. This apparent good-will seemed to him hypocritical ; the greeting, a Judas's kiss ; the lamentations, crocodile's tears ! Yet he promised to make concessions so far as his conscience would permit him to do, but certainly nothing more. They mutually agreed, furthermore, "that both parties should be forbidden to write and to teach upon the questions at issue." Besides this, Miltitz proposed to write to the Pope, requesting him to appoint a learned bishop to act as arbitrator, having in mind the Archbishop of Treves (Trier). The joint meeting was to be held hereafter in the city of Coblenz.

Thus far the negotiations seem to have taken a favorable turn. Luther, likewise, addressed a meek epistle to the Pope. He also published an address to the German people, in which he seeks to refute the slanders of those who had endeavored to prejudice him and his cause by misrepresenting his teachings about intercession, purgatory, indulgences, the commands of the Holy Church, good works, and the Roman Church ; he aims to show, that in no wise does he depart from the faith of all Christendom ; that in order to maintain peace he is willing to make sacrifices ; and he also professes his belief in certain Roman Catholic teachings which he afterward publicly rejected.

Miltitz seems to have been satisfied with these declarations of Luther; though it could not yet be known how they would be regarded by the Papal authorities. Further negotiations to induce Luther to go to Coblenz were unsuccessful, for he would not venture to undergo the risk upon an uncertainty, and hence declined. He pleasantly remarked that he had not so much time to spare to take so long a promenade! Besides, the Archbishop of Treves had received no mandate from Rome to hold the proposed conference meeting.

In the meanwhile the Emperor Maximilian \* had died, and the Elector of Saxony had become Imperial Vicar, an event which exercised a favorable influence upon Luther's cause. The papal authorities were obliged, now more than ever, to take the Elector into account in all their plans, for his position in Germany exercised a determining influence. The successor of Maximilian was his nineteen-year-old nephew, King Charles † of Spain. He was no friend to German life and institutions. Luther and his cause experienced this on more than one occasion.

\* Maximilian I. was of the House of Hapsburg, born in 1459, and died in 1519. He became Emperor of Germany in 1493.

† Charles I. of Spain, better known as Charles V., Emperor of Germany, was born in 1500, and died in 1558. He was chosen Emperor in 1519, and retired into a convent in 1556, his brother Ferdinand succeeding him as Emperor of Germany.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DISPUTATION AT LEIPSIC.

WHILST Miltitz continued his attempts at reconciliation and prepared the way for a meeting between Luther and the Archbishop of Treves, Luther felt himself obliged to get ready for a public debate with Dr. Eck.\* The latter had been carrying on an epistolary war with one of Luther's colleagues, Dr. Karlstadt. This was now to be ended by a public disputation at Leipsic. To this end Dr. Eck published a number of theses which he proposed to defend against Karlstadt. But in these theses Luther was attacked, rather than his colleague, especially in regard to the supremacy of the Pope in the early centuries of the Christian Church. On this point Karlstadt had neither written nor spoken. Hence it was evident that Eck's theses were directed against Luther, who felt himself obliged once more to enter the arena of conflict. Since he had been attacked by Eck he demanded the right to take part in the debate. His friends endeavored to dissuade him from this step, but he soon convinced them that he must go himself and defend his cause, saying : "Even should I perish, the world will not go to destruction on that account. By the grace of God the Wittenbergers [meaning his adherents] have so far progressed that they do not need me."

\* John Mayr von Eck was born in Eck, Swabia, in 1486, and died in Ingolstadt, in Bavaria, in 1543. The latter part of his life was devoted to effect a reunion of the conflicting parties.

The disputation was appointed for the 27th of June, 1519. Duke George of Saxony came from Dresden to Leipsic and ordered the largest hall in his palace, the Pleissenburg, to be used for that purpose, and handsomely decorated. Dr. Eck arrived in time ; the Wittenbergers, on Friday, June 24th. "The latter entered by the Grimma gate," thus writes an eye-witness, "escorted by 200 of their students, armed with spears and halberds. Dr. Karlstadt rode first, followed by Luther and Melanchthon in an open wagon. After they had entered the Grimma gate and had reached the doors of St. Paul's church cemetery, Dr. Karlstadt's wagon broke down, and the doctor was thrown into the mud. Dr. Martinus and his companion, Philippus, rode by and continued their course. The people that saw it remarked : "Luther will triumph, but Karlstadt will be defeated."

The day before the appointed time, it was agreed upon that Karlstadt and Eck should open the debate. On the 27th of June the disputation was inaugurated with great secular and religious festivities, beginning with an address of welcome in Latin, continuing with a mass in St. Thomas's church, and concluding with a musical concert. A large number of theologians, as well as educated and uneducated laymen, had assembled to attend the proceedings. During four days Eck and Karlstadt contended about theological questions of the free-will of man and his relation to the operations of divine grace. Eck had the advantage over Karlstadt, both in dialectic ability and in power of memory. The members of the University of Leipsic supported Eck and exalted him in every possible way. But Luther and his Wittenberg associates they regarded at a distance. Between the students of the two universities violent contentions arose upon the questions at issue.

On the 4th of July the debate began between Luther and Eck. A contemporary and eye-witness has preserved the following sketch of the contending parties : “ Martin Luther is of medium stature, meagre in body, and so exhausted by his cares and studies that one can almost count every bone in his frame. He is as yet in the strength of manhood. His voice is clear and distinct ; his learning and knowledge of the Scriptures are wonderful, so that he has full command.

“ He understands Greek and Hebrew well enough to judge of different interpretations of the Scriptures. Nor is he lacking in material for his discourses, for he has possession of an extraordinary amount of facts and words. In social life and intercourse he is polite and friendly ; there is nothing gloomy or proud about him ; and he has the disposition to accommodate himself to different persons and varying circumstances. In society he is cheerful and witty. He is always lively, joyful, and positive, and has a pleasing countenance, no matter how hard his opponents threaten him ; so much so that one is obliged to believe that the man cannot bear so heavy a burden without the help of the gods. By many he is reproached with being intemperate in his attacks and biting in his criticisms, more so indeed than is becoming to a theologian, and to one who is presenting something new in divine things. In the case of Karlstadt all these characteristics are very much reduced in degree ; he is smaller in stature, his face is dark and sunburnt, his voice hollow and disagreeable. Eck, on the contrary, is tall, well-built, and robust, has a full round voice proceeding from a large chest, well-endowed either for an actor or a town-crier. His features are such that he would sooner be taken for a butcher or a soldier than for a theologian. His memory is excellent, and if his understanding were likewise,

he would be regarded as a perfect work of nature. But he is lacking in quick perceptive faculties and in acuteness of judgment. His aim is to adduce a large amount of stuff, to mystify his hearers, and to produce the impression of great superiority. To this must be added his incredible audacity, for as soon as he observes that he has been caught in the net of his opponent, he seeks to turn the discussion into another channel. And then he possesses great vivacity in speaking and shouting, and freedom in gesticulating with the arms and the whole body."

The debate had reached its climax when Luther referred to the theses of Huss, condemned by the Council of Constance, in 1415, and in bad repute all over Germany. Eck endeavored to throw the suspicion of sympathy with the Bohemian heresy upon Luther, in discussing the question, whether the supremacy of the Pope was based upon divine or human right. But Luther guarded himself well, and yet maintained that among the articles of Huss there were many that were Christian and evangelical, such as these: that there is but one universal Christian Church; and that the belief in the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church is not necessary to salvation. Whilst Luther was thus quoting the theses of Huss,\* Duke George cried out with a loud voice, audible to all, "May the deuce take that!" shaking his head and planting his arms at his sides. At another time, when Luther declared that the Pope derives his authority not by divine but by human right, Duke George again exclaimed, "The Pope *is* Pope, whether

\* Duke George of Saxony remained all his life-time one of the bitterest opponents of Luther and the Reformation. He persecuted and punished his own subjects for espousing the new doctrines. At his death, in 1539, his brother Henry succeeded him and formally introduced Protestantism.

by human or by divine right.” The debate upon the chief question, the supremacy of the Pope, was continued for five days, but without any result. Further disputations concerning purgatory, indulgence, and repentance were of minor importance; likewise the closing debate between Eck and Karlstadt. On the 15th of July the disputation was closed. Eck claimed the victory. He departed with a display of triumph, extolled by his friends, and rewarded with favor and honors by Duke George of Saxony. Luther left for home in ill-humor. He thus expresses himself about the Leipsic disputation: “Eck and his friends did not seek truth, but fame. No wonder, then, that the debate had a bad beginning and worse ending.”

But in truth this disputation was very helpful to the dissemination of Reformation thoughts. Everywhere the questions at issue were discussed. “Luther’s teachings,” writes a contemporary, “have aroused so much strife, dissension, and disturbance among the people, that there is scarce a country or a city, a village or a family, that has not been divided and agitated even unto blows.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCERNING THE BAN OF EXCOMMUNICATIO.

ANOTHER interval of time had elapsed. Luther had once more returned to Wittenberg and zealously devoted himself to his work in the professor's chair as well as in the pulpit, where he clearly and impressively proclaimed the new truths. In his writings, too, he was not idle. And herein a new controversy developed itself.

As yet the Pope had passed no public sentence of condemnation upon Luther, although he had often called him a heretic deserving his anathema. The universities of Cologne and Louvain, as well as the Bishop of Meissen, now brought their complaints against Luther before the Pope. The former maintained that Luther's writings should be destroyed by fire, and he himself forced to recant. The latter called attention to a passage in one of Luther's pamphlets, in which he contended that the Church should again grant the cup (the wine) to the laity in the Lord's Supper. For, why should the priest be entitled to more than the layman? Christ knows of no such difference. In his profound study of the Scriptures this conviction had grown upon him, and in this point of doctrine he found himself in accord with Huss and his followers. He was now stigmatized as a fellow-heretic with Huss; but he was not much troubled about it. He replied to these accusations as follows: "All that I have thus far taught, I have learned from

John Huss \*—but without knowing it. John Staupitz has done the same. In short, we are all Hussites, without being aware of it. The Apostle Paul and Augustine were also Hussites ! For fear and trembling, I do not know what to think of the impending judgments of God upon men, who, for more than one hundred years, have condemned the clearest evangelical truth, and have suffered no one to declare it.” And at another time he wrote to Spalatin : “ Do not imagine that Christ’s cause upon earth can be furthered in sweet peace. The word of holiness can never be proclaimed without unrest and danger ; it is a word of eternal majesty, and accomplishes great things and wonderful, among the high and the great. It kills, as says the prophet, the fat and the strong in Israel (Ezekiel xxxiv. 16). In this matter peace must be given up or else the word of God denied. The war is the Lord’s, who came not to bring peace into the world. If thou dost rightly estimate the Gospel, then do not believe that its cause can be conducted without tumult, offence, and disturbance. The word of God is a sword ; it is war, overthrow, vexation, poison. It will meet the children of Ephraim, as Amos (v. 19) says, like a bear in the way and a lion in the woods.” And concerning himself Luther says : “ I cannot deny that I am more violent than I ought to be ; they know that, and for that very reason ought not to have excited the dog ! How hard it is to temper the heat and restrain

\* John Huss, the Bohemian Reformer, was born in 1373, and burned at the stake July 6th, 1415. On his way to the place of execution he uttered this memorable prophecy : “ You are to-day roasting a lean goose (the meaning of his name) ; but after a hundred years you will hear the song of a swan, arising from my ashes, whom you will not be able to roast.” Hence the swan is often found in pictures of Luther.

the pen, thou knowest from personal experience. This is the reason why I have always been unwilling publicly to proclaim my cause. And the more I am disposed not to do so, the more I am compelled against my will ; and this happens because of the severest accusations which are heaped upon God's word and myself. And so shameful has this been, that even if my pen and my impetuosity had not carried me away, a heart of stone would have been moved to take up arms ; how much the more I that am impetuous by nature, and possess not a very dull pen !”

Luther soon had ample opportunity to set his pen in motion. The entire Dominican order exerted its influence against Luther. Eck hastened to Rome to work against him. The Bishop of Brandenberg in a moment of excitement is said to have remarked that he would not place his head to rest until he had thrown Martin Luther into the fire ! Duke George of Saxony, shocked at Luther's agreement with the Hussites, preferred charges against him before his own ruler, the Elector of Saxony. In short, mighty enemies appeared from all quarters, bent upon his destruction.

As yet the Elector protected him. And from many other parties did Luther receive active support. His writings were scattered broadcast, in hundreds of copies, all over the land, gaining for him many friends and adherents. Many who had formerly been at enmity with Rome now united their cause and fortunes with his own. But the most renowned among the learned of his times, Erasmus and Reuchlin, prudently kept in the background. On the other hand, Ulrich von Hutten, a German knight, espoused Luther's cause with bolder courage and a powerful activity. Daring and spirited, he wielded a vigorous pen, and was prepared to serve

the Gospel with his sword. He glowed with ardor for the honor and greatness of Germany, and hated the Italian spirit. From early youth he was an enemy to monkery, and by his boldness he inflicted many a blow upon the papacy. Among the circle of his friends and equals he secured numerous supporters for Luther's cause. At first he regarded the advent of the Augustinian as a pitiable, monkish quarrel ; but soon he was better informed. After many wanderings and manifold experiences he found at last an energetic and powerful friend in the person of Franz von Sickingen, experienced in war and informed as to political questions. Ulrich von Hutten now united his fortunes with the latter in order to make common cause against the obscurantists and the Roman hierarchy. Landstuhl and Ebernburg were the names of the strong castles of Franz von Sickingen, which could afford a safe protection to the oppressed. As such they were now offered to the bold monk who had attacked the papacy with so keen weapons. Should the ban of excommunication arrive, and should Luther no longer be safe in Wittenberg, then Sickingen's burg would afford an excellent place of refuge. And another knight, Sylvester von Schauenburg, wrote to him : "Should the Elector and others in authority demand of you to recede, do not let that trouble you ; nor do you take refuge among the Bohemians ; for I and hundreds of the nobility will protect you from danger."

Such messages must have been highly welcome to Luther. "Schauenburg and Sickingen," \* said he, "have

\* Schauenburg was a native and inhabitant of Holstein. Sickingen was one of the last of the German knights who maintained the right of private warfare. He was noted for his valor and generosity. He died in 1528, of a wound received in defending

delivered me from the fear of men. I shall now have to encounter the wrath of demons.” He wished that the Pope be informed that he, Luther, would now find protection from the shafts of his lightnings in the heart of Germany ; and that, thus protected, he would attack the Romanists in a manner far different from that in which he had been able to attack them in his official position. “ My opponents shall know,” wrote Luther, “ that what I have not yet said against them has been owing, not to my leniency, nor to their merit or tyranny, but to the name and fame of the Elector and the common interests of the University of Wittenberg. As far as I am concerned, the die is cast ! Rome’s favor and wrath are contemned ! I will never become reconciled to them, nor hold fellowship with them. Let them condemn and burn my books !”

But Luther’s adherents, and especially Ulrich von Hutten,\* said, “ What have we to do with the Romans and with their bishop ? Have we not archbishops and bishops in Germany ? As if we were obliged to kiss the feet of the Pope ! Let Germany return, and it will return, to its own bishops and shepherds !”

“ The time for silence is passed, and the time for speaking is come.” Thus Luther begins his pamphlet, “ To the Christian Nobles of the German Nation : About

his castle Landstuhl, near Kaiserslautern, in the Palatinate. His other stronghold, Ebernburg, is now a picturesque ruin on the Rhine.

\* Hutten was born near Fulda in 1488, and died in Switzerland in 1523. He was placed in a cloister to become a monk, but ran away and led a short, wandering, and tempestuous career. His intense national spirit, his bitter enmity against Rome, and his caustic satires upon the immoral and superstitious clergy, aided the cause of the Reformation.

the Reformation of Christendom." He now appeals to the laity, in the hope that God will use them to deliver His Church, since the clergy have become altogether indifferent. Not through wantonness or temerity does he presume to address the Emperor and Christian nobles of the German nation ; but the need and the grievances which afflict all classes in Christendom, and especially in Germany, compel him to cry out and to ask whether God would grant the Spirit to some one to extend the helping hand to miserable humanity.

"The Romanists," says Luther, "have with great adroitness built a triple wall about themselves, so that no one has been able to reform them, and because of which all Christendom has fearfully degenerated. In the first place, whenever they have been threatened by the secular power, they have resisted and said, The secular power has no right over the spiritual power ; but, on the contrary, the latter has control over the former. And when the Holy Scripture was brought to bear upon them, they contended that the Pope alone should interpret it. And, in the third place, when they are threatened with a council, they pretend that no one but the Pope can call a council. Thus have they secretly stolen three of our rods, that they may go unpunished ; and having fortified themselves with this triple wall, they have carried on their knavery and wickedness in security."

These three walls Luther now proposes to overturn and demolish. He declares the difference between the spiritual and secular orders to be fictitious and hypocritical ; he maintains that all Christians belong to the spiritual order, and that there is no difference between them other than that of the respective offices which different members have wherewith to serve one another, according to 1 Peter ii. 9 and Rev. iii. 10. The secular power is not superior to

the spiritual power. The former is entitled to rule free and unhindered upon its own territory. No Pope or bishop herein can interfere ; no priest is exempt from its control. The second wall is even weaker and more unsafe, for they pretend to be masters of Scripture, when during their whole lives they have learned nothing from it. Christ has said of all Christians that they should be taught of God. So that even an obscure man, if he be a true Christian, may have the right understanding of the Bible. And, on the other hand, the Pope, if he be not a true Christian, will not be taught of God. If the Pope were always and alone right, then we ought to pray, "I believe in the Pope of Rome." The Christian Church would thus, as it were, be concentrated into one person, which would be nothing else than satanic and infernal error. The third wall, however, falls with the first two ; for where the Pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, we are in duty bound to stand by the word of God and to admonish Him according to Christ's command : "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone" (Matt. xviii. 15). But if he is to be accused before the church, then the church must be convened in a council, which should be a free Christian council, bound by no vow to the Pope, nor by any so-called canonical law, but subject only to God's word in the Holy Scriptures.

Luther then considers in detail the several points upon which the council is to act, and concerning which a reformation must be insisted upon. He calls the Pope the antichrist. He contrasts his self-exaltation, his worldly pride, the idolatry practised with him, with the life and person of Christ, who went about in poverty, and offered himself a sacrifice on the cross. He considers at length the tyranny exercised by the Roman court over

the local state churches, and especially over those of Germany, in frequent extortions. The churches of each country should be permitted to regulate their own affairs at home. Then he protests against the haughty and insolent behavior of the Pope towards the German Emperor, in presuming to control the latter, obliging him to hold his stirrup and kiss his foot ! In his spiritual office, in preaching, in dispensing the word of divine grace, the Pope is indeed superior to the Emperor ; but in all other things the Emperor is superior. Luther demands, furthermore, the abolition of the state of celibacy for the clergy ; restriction of the system of monasticism, of festivals and holidays, as well as of pilgrimages ; organization of charitable work, and the erection of schools for boys and girls. He is deeply distressed when he regards the condition of the youth, who, in the very centre of Christendom, are languishing in ignorance and going to destruction in sin. And after touching upon many other questions, such as the extortionate charges and usurious interest in the loaning of money, he concludes : “ I am well aware that I have sung in too lofty a strain, and have said many things in vain, attacking other things also too sharply. But what shall I do ? I am at least obliged to express my opinion. If I were able I would also do that which I claim should be done. I would rather have the world angry at me than have God angry. They can deprive me of nothing more than my life. I have often offered peace to my opponents, but God has obliged me to open my mouth wider and give them enough to do to speak and to write, to bark and to cry. There is one more song that I can sing ; if they are itching for it they shall hear it, and in the loudest strains.” And his closing words are : “ God give us all a Christian understanding, and

especially to the Christian nobles of the German nation a right spiritual courage, to do the very best for our poor Church. Amen.”

In the course of a few weeks, in the month of August, 1520, four thousand copies of this “war-trumpet” were circulated, and Luther was obliged to publish a new edition. Besides this, he also wrote a series of pamphlets for instruction and consolation. He wielded a ready pen. “I have surely a rapid hand and a quick memory,” says Luther, “so that what I write flows freely of its own account, and not as if I had to produce it; and yet I am not able to get over the ground.”

As to the new song he wished to sing of Rome, he no doubt referred to his treatise about “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.” In this he speaks, with clearness and deep religious fervor, of the meaning of the Sacraments. But he opposes the so-called sacraments of confirmation, marriage, ordination, and supreme unction. At the close he says: “I hear that the papal anathemas are ready to be hurled against me to compel me to recant. If this be so, then I wish that this little book be considered a part of my future recantation, in order that they may not vainly complain about their inflated tyranny. And in a little while I will issue a recantation, by the help of Christ, the like of which the Roman court has hitherto neither seen nor heard, and therewith I shall prove my obedience, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LUTHER BURNS THE PAPAL BULL OF EXCOMMUNICATIION.

WHAT had long been anticipated now came to pass. Eck arrived in Germany with the papal bull of excommunication. On the 21st of September, 1520, he published it in Meissen. It was also proclaimed elsewhere. In the beginning of October it was published in Wittenberg.

The papal bull begins as follows : “Arise, O Lord, and judge thy cause ! Remember the reproach which the foolish cast against Thee all day long ! St. Peter, St. Paul, the congregation of saints, and the whole church are called upon to arise. The foxes would lay waste the vineyard of the Lord ; a wild boar has entered therein ; a savage beast would pasture there.” Then forty-one of Luther’s theses are considered and condemned as heretical. He himself is called upon to recant within sixty days. If he and his followers refuse, they will be treated as stiff-necked heretics. His writings are to be burned, so that his remembrance shall be totally blotted out of the congregation of Christian believers. All intercourse with him and his adherents is forbidden. Every one is commanded to seize Martin Luther and to deliver him to the Pope in Rome. There he shall be dealt with according to law. Without doubt the punishment intimated refers to death at the stake, for the papal bull expressly condemns the declaration of Luther : to burn heretics is against the will of the Holy Spirit.

Luther himself received the papal interdict with great calmness of soul. What next would happen he did not know ; he intrusted it to Him whose throne is in the heavens, and who had foreseen this event, its beginning and ending, from all eternity. He had but little hope in the good-will of the Emperor. "Would that Charles were a man," he cried out, "and that he would contend for Christ and against Satan." He called to mind the Biblical saying, "Put not your trust in princes" (Ps. cxlv. 3). "They are but men, and cannot help you. If the Gospel were of such a nature that it could be diffused and supported by the great men of this world, then God would not have intrusted it to fishermen."

Eck, however, was badly received, with his bull, in Germany. In Leipsic the citizens posted warnings against him on every street-corner. To save himself from personal violence he was obliged to take refuge in the monastery of St. Paul's church. The students sang satirical songs for his benefit. He did not meet with better treatment in Erfurt, where the students, arms in hand, made an attack upon him, seized the printed copies of the bull, and threw them into the river Gera. Miltitz was nevertheless encouraged to resume his attempts at reconciliation between the Pope and Luther. And notwithstanding the bull of excommunication, he did not doubt that the conflict could be allayed. By the advice of the Elector, Luther agreed to make another effort, and directed a letter to Pope Leo, inclosing a new treatise, upon the Liberty of the Christian, comprehending the substance of Christian life. And thus does Luther declare himself : "A Christian is a free man over all things, and subject to no man. No external things can make him pious and free, but the holy Gospel only, and a strong, pure faith in God and Jesus Christ.

Through this a Christian is exalted above all things, and made his own master. Nothing can injure his salvation ; everything must be subject to him and to his salvation. Who can perfectly conceive the honor and the supreme elevation of a Christian ? Through his kingdom he controls all earthly things ; through his priesthood he controls God, for God does what he asks and wills.”

But, on the other hand, a Christian is also a ministering servant in all things and subject to every one. For he has still another will in his flesh that would lead him captive in sin. Hence he dare not be idle. He must labor with himself to expel his evil desires and to subdue his own body. Nor dare we despise the weakness or the weak faith of our neighbor, but must serve him in all things to his improvement. Thus the Christian, who is a free man, becomes a ministering servant in all things and subject to every one. And at the close he says : “A Christian does not live unto himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor : in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. Through faith he rises above himself into God ; from God he returns again among his own through love, and yet always remains in God and in divine love.”

This treatise is one of the finest that came from Luther’s pen. It stands on a level with and is equal to the other two famous Reformation treatises, “To the Christian Nobles of the German Nation” and “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.” It is a glorious testimony showing that, in spite of the Pope’s anathema, his soul was resting confidently in God. And hence he could write to the Pope : “From this treatise his Holiness might perceive how he (Luther) would rather be engaged, and much more profitably indeed, were he not hindered by impious papal flatterers.”

In the papal bull he found his teachings misrepresented. Hence he wrote another treatise entitled, "Against the Bulls of the Antichrist." Again he appealed to a council of the Church, as he had done two years before this, but from a different standpoint, and with a conscious certainty of the justice of his cause.

In the meanwhile the judgment of the papal bull was executed upon Luther's writings, in the city of Cologne and in the presence of the Emperor. In Louvain and Mayence they were also publicly burned.

Luther hesitated no longer. On the 10th of November, 1520, he publicly announced that the bull of excommunication and the papal books of canonical law would be burned on the following morning at nine o'clock. At the appointed time, students, masters, and doctors were assembled at the designated place, at the Elster Gate, near the Augustinian monastery. A Master, *i.e.* an advanced student, prepared the place, piled on the fagots, and applied the fire. Then Luther cast the Roman decretals, together with the papal bull, into the flames, exclaiming, "Because thou hast offended the Holy One of the Lord, be thou consumed with everlasting fire."

This being accomplished, Luther returned with his friends to the city. Several hundred students remained at the fire feeding the flames with papal writings. Others paraded the streets, deriding Eck and the papal bull.

On the following day, after the opening lecture at the university, Luther earnestly addressed his hearers, warning them to beware of papal laws and statutes. To burn the Pope's decretals was mere child's play. Far more important and necessary would it be to burn the Pope, *i.e.* the Roman authority, with all its teachings and abominations. "If ye do not," said he, "with all your heart, resist the blasphemous government of the

Pope, ye cannot be saved. For the Pope's dominion is so contrary to Christ's kingdom and to the Christian life, that it would be safer and better to live in an uninhabited desert than to dwell in an anti-Christian empire. To Staupitz, who had retired to Salzburg, he wrote that in burning the Pope's bull he at first feared and trembled. But now he rejoiced as at no other act of his life. Luther, by these proceedings, had formally severed his ecclesiastical relations with the Church of Rome. To complete this act also externally, he now released himself from the obligations of monastic laws.

But by his bold actions he had let loose a storm which raged over all Germany—a storm which could not be quieted until the Judgment Day. Thus were the ruling spirits excited on both sides of the question. Germany was divided into two hostile camps, that fought each other most violently, with pictures and in writings, with biting satire and in sober earnestness. In the German nation, complains a contemporary, there prevailed such controversy, disturbance, and disorder that no kingdom, no city, no village, and no house was free from this quarrel, but all were divided, the one against the other. Everywhere excitement and bitter feeling! Here and there wonderful, horrible stories were reported about wars and insurrections! Ulrich von Hutten had really purposed to resort to arms to assist the Gospel with the sword, and to drive the Romanists from the land. But Luther restrained him, saying, “We must not contend for the Gospel with brute force and murder. Through the Word the world has been overcome; through the Word the Church has been preserved; through the Word the Church will be purified and restored.”

The time allotted for recantation had expired. On the

3d of January, 1521, Pope Leo issued another bull against Luther and his adherents. But the papal authority had been so completely weakened that the anathema and interdict were received in Germany with shouts of laughter.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LUTHER BEFORE THE EMPEROR AT WORMS.

It was on the 16th of April, 1521, at 10 o'clock in the morning, that the watchman upon the tower of the cathedral at Worms on the Rhine signalled the approach of a strange cavalcade. At the head rode the herald, with the insignia of the imperial eagle upon his breast. In an open wagon followed Dr. Martin Luther, in his monk's attire, with three companions, surrounded by a great array of stately riders, who had joined him on the way or had gone out from the city to meet him. Thousands had hurriedly gathered from all sides to view the procession as it entered the city, to behold the daring Augustinian monk who would appear before the Emperor and the Imperial Diet. Young and old, high and low, crowded to see him. Mothers lifted their infants high into the air. A great multitude of people surged about the wagon and the accompanying horsemen. And thus they proceeded together to the mansion of the Knights of St. John, where Luther secured lodgment. As he descended from the wagon he remarked, "God will be with me."

Not for a moment had Luther ever been in doubt what he would do if summoned to appear before the Emperor. "When I am called," said he, "I will ride there sick if I cannot go well; for I dare not doubt that the Lord calls if the Emperor desires me to do this.

And should they employ force, as seems likely—since they have not called me to afford better information—we must intrust ourselves to the hand of God. He that preserved His three servants in the fiery furnace of the King of Babylon still lives and reigns. If He will not preserve me, little does it matter, especially when we think of Christ, who, with so great ignominy, to the offence of all and the destruction of many, was put to death. But in this case, no reference is to be had to any one's danger, nor to any one's welfare, but solely to the cause of the Gospel, that it be not exposed to the scorn of the godless; in order that our enemies be not given good cause to defame us, as if we dared not confess what we taught or were afraid to shed our blood on its behalf. May Christ, out of mercy, save us from such reproach, and save them from such glorying."

Luther received the summons of the Emperor at the hands of the imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, of Oppenheim, on the 26th of March, 1521. He was to appear before the Emperor at Worms within twenty-one days, and a safe-conduct was assured him. The city council of Wittenberg provided wagon and horses for the journey. On the 2d of April, Tuesday after Easter, Luther departed for Worms, accompanied to the suburbs by his friends and colleagues and several hundred students. In bidding them farewell he admonished them, as his scholars, to hold fast to the pure doctrine of the Gospel. He took leave of his friend Melanchthon in the following words: "Should I not return again, and should my enemies murder me, then I adjure thee, my dear brother, do not cease to teach, nor to adhere to, the truth of the Divine Word. Labor at the same time for me during my absence. Thou canst do it better than I. Hence there is not much lost if I am gone, so that

thou dost remain ! In thee our Lord God will yet have a learned warrior.”

After he had taken a touching farewell of his friends, who believed that they had seen him for the last time on earth, he continued his journey by way of Leipsic, Naumburg, Weimar, Erfurt, Gotha, and Eisenach. In the last named cities he preached. The people of Erfurt had prepared a festive and glorious reception ; they went out of the city to meet him, and received him with great enthusiasm.

At Eisenach, Luther’s beloved city, he became very sick. Blood-letting was resorted to, and the burgo-master gave him some “noble water” (“edel Wässerlein”) to drink. On the following day he continued his journey, but all the way to Frankfort he felt very much indisposed, more so than he had ever felt before. Whenever he approached a city or town the people flocked to see the wonderful man who had been so bold as to oppose the Pope and all the world besides ! To those, however, who warned him that he would speedily be burned in Worms, as Huss had been in Constance, he replied : “And even though they should kindle a fire as high as heaven between Wittenberg and Worms, yet would I go and appear in the name of the Lord ; yea, I will confess Christ in the very mouth of Behemoth !”

As he was nearing the city of Worms, his friend Spalatin, who was in the company of the Elector, sent him a message warning him not to enter the city and to incur so great danger. Luther replied to him : “To Worms was I called, and to Worms must I go. And were there as many devils there as tiles upon the roofs, yet would I enter into that city.” Sickingen invited him to come to Castle Ebernburg, there to secure his life, and to treat with the Emperor’s confessor. Luther declined

the invitation, saying: "Not to Ebernburg, but to Worms have I been summoned. If the imperial confessor have aught to say to me, let him seek me there." Moreover, he was obliged to hasten to reach Worms in time before his safe-conduct had expired.

On the same day that he arrived in Worms he was visited by a large number of the nobility, clergy, and laity, until late at night. The Landgrave of Hesse also called to see him, and in departing said, "If your cause is a just one, Doctor, then may God assist you."

The Papists, on the other hand, sought to persuade his Imperial Majesty to seize Luther and to put him to death. They adduced the example of John Huss, and said, "To a heretic one is under no obligation, either to grant a safe-conduct or to keep it." But the Emperor Charles replied, "Whatever promise has been made must be fulfilled."

Early on the following morning the imperial marshal notified Luther to appear at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of the Emperor, the Elector, and other nobles of the empire, to hear why he had been ordered to appear.

At the appointed time Luther was sent for. Before going he sought comfort and strength in earnest prayer to God. Then, with cheerful countenance, he followed the imperial marshal, by secret passage-ways, to the assembly room of the episcopal palace, where the Emperor lodged. The main street was impassable on account of the great multitude of people that desired to see him. Many had ascended to the roofs of the houses, and vast throngs could with difficulty be kept from the palace.

As Luther was passing to the assembly room of the diet, a noted commander, George von Frundsberg, touched

Luther saw what was coming, and poured out his indignation in the fiercest of his pamphlets. The ‘aller heiligst,’ ‘most holy’ Pope, became ‘aller höllish,’ ‘most hellish.’ The pretended ‘free Council’ meant death and hell, and Germany was to be bathed in blood. ‘That devilish Popery,’ he said, ‘is the last worse curse of the earth, the very worst that all the devils, with all their might, can generate. God help us all. Amen.’ Very dreadful and unbecoming language, the modern reader thinks, who has only known the wolf disguised in an innocent sheepskin. The wolf is the same that he was; and if ever he recovers his power, he will show himself unchanged in his old nature. In Luther’s time there was no sheepskin; there was not the smallest affectation of sheepskin. The one passionate desire of the See of Rome, and the army of faithful prelates and priests, was to carry fire and sword through every country which had dared to be spiritually free.

In the midst of these prospects Luther reached his last birthday. He was tired, and sick at heart, and sick in body. In the summer of 1545 he had wished to retire to his farm, but Wittenberg could not spare him, and he continued regularly to

preach. His sight began to fail. In January, 1546, he began a letter to a friend, calling himself 'old, spent, worn, weary, cold, and with but one eye to see with.' On the 28th of that month he undertook a journey to Eisleben, where he had been born, to compose a difference between the Counts Mansfelt. He caught a chill on the road, but he seemed to shake it off, and was able to attend to business. He had fallen into the hands of lawyers, and the affair went on but slowly. On the 14th of February he preached, and, as it turned out, for the last time, in Eisleben Church. An issue in the leg, artificially kept open to relieve his system, had been allowed to heal for want of proper attendance. He was weak and exhausted after the sermon. He felt the end near, and wished to be with his family again. 'I will get home,' he said, 'and get into my coffin, and give the worms a fat doctor.'

But wife and home he was never to see again, and he was to pass from off the earth at the same spot where his eyes were first opened to the light. On the 17th he had a sharp pain in his chest. It went off, however; he was at supper in the public room, and talked with his usual energy. He

approving of the despotic papal rule. Citing the words of Christ in his defence, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil" (John 18 : 23), he asked for counter testimony from the evangelical and prophetical writings. If thus convinced, he would very readily and willingly recant all his alleged errors. He would then be the first one to cast his writings into the flames.

Luther spoke in both German and Latin. After he had finished, the princes held a short consultation. Then the imperial representative reproached him for having spoken disrespectfully, and for not having answered the proposed questions. He repelled Luther's demand for counter-evidence, and maintained that his heresies had been condemned by the Church and by its general councils. What was now demanded of him was a plain and straightforward answer, whether he would or would not recant.

Thereupon Luther replied : " Since your Imperial Majesty have desired a direct answer, I shall give such an one as shall have neither horns nor teeth, viz., except I be convinced with clear and undoubted evidence of Holy Scripture—for I believe neither in the Pope nor in councils alone, since it is evident they have often erred and contradicted themselves—and as my conscience is bound by God's Word, I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor advisable to act contrary to conscience. Here I stand ; I cannot do otherwise ; God help me ! Amen !"

At about eight o'clock in the evening the diet adjourned. Darkness had set in, and the hall was dimly lighted by torches. The assembly broke up with a feeling of excitement, which increased when Luther was led away amid the hissing of the Spaniards. It was generally believed that he would now be held as pris-

oner. Whilst he was standing in the midst of the throng, Duke Erich of Brunswick sent him a silver tankard of Eimbeck beer, with the message that he should drink and be refreshed. Luther enjoyed it right well, and said, "As Duke Erich has remembered me, so may our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in his last hour." Luther was now happy at heart. As soon as he returned to his lodging-place, he lifted up both hands and cried out, "I have done it; I have done it!" And continuing, he remarked: "If I had a thousand heads, I would lose them all rather than to recant."

The Elector was astonished at Luther's course. In the evening he said to Spalatin: "Well indeed has our father, Dr. Martin Luther, spoken in the presence of the Emperor and all the princes, both in Latin and German; but he is too bold for me." The Emperor himself seems to have been very slightly impressed by the Augustinian monk. When, however, he spoke those memorable words, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise," the Emperor was touched, and remarked, "The monk speaks without fear and with great courage." The day before he said, "This monk will never make a heretic of me."

The Emperor Charles possessed a very inadequate understanding of German affairs; his knowledge of the German language was imperfect. He was a Spaniard at heart, and by his early education firmly attached to the doctrines of the Church. The new teachings of Luther, and the movement emanating therefrom, he viewed exclusively from a political standpoint.

On the following day the Emperor announced to the assembled members of the diet that since Martin Luther was not inclined to recede a finger's-breadth from his errors, after the example of his predecessors, who had

always been obedient to the Roman Church, he must protect the ancient faith and maintain the authority of the Pope.

He would therefore be obliged to prosecute Luther with ban and interdict, and in every other available way. Yet he would not violate his promise of safe-conduct, but permit him to return to his home.

Before Luther left Worms another attempt was made to heal the strife by a friendly interchange of opinions. Yet after two days spent in negotiations Luther sent this declaration to the Archbishop of Treves : “ Most gracious sir, I cannot recede. Let God do unto me as He will. ‘ If this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.’ And thus, if my cause is not of God, it will not last more than two or three years ; but if it be of God, it cannot be overthrown.” Then he added : “ I entreat your Grace to secure for me from his Imperial Majesty permission to return home ; for this is the tenth day of my sojourn here, and nothing has been accomplished.”

Within three hours Luther received a letter of safe-conduct, with instructions to return to Wittenberg within twenty-one days, and on the way to abstain from exciting the people either by preaching or by writing.

On the 26th of April Luther and the friends who had accompanied him to Worms departed for home. He rode in the same wagon in which he had come. The imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, went with him as far as Friedberg.\* Here Luther dismissed him with a letter to the Emperor, in which he returns thanks for the safe-conduct, and offers both to do and to suffer all things for the sake of his Majesty and the empire. But one thing, how-

\* Not far from Frankfort.

ever, he must reserve : the right to profess the Word of God, free and untrammelled.

On the 30th of October he reached Hersfeld,\* where in spite of ban and interdict he was received by the abbot with distinguished honors and very hospitably entertained. Luther writes to Spalatin about his reception as follows : "The abbot sent his chancellor and chamberlain to welcome me a mile (German) from town ; he himself received me with a great retinue near his castle and escorted me into the city. At the gates I was greeted by the chief magistrate. In the monastery I was gloriously entertained and lodged ; the following morning at five o'clock I was urged to preach, though I declined. The next day the abbot accompanied us to the edge of the woods and through his chancellor provided for us all a farewell dinner at Berka."\*\*

Luther then continued on his journey to Eisenach, whence many came out to meet him. Here he preached, notwithstanding the imperial injunction. A portion of his companions now left him, to take the direct route for home.

But Luther, with two companions, visited some of his relatives near Möhra. Here he lodged with his uncle Heinz, and preached on the 4th of May under a linden tree near the church. From Möhra he had intended to go through the woods to Gotha. His relatives accompanied him as far as the Castle Altenstein ; there they bade him farewell. The wagon now disappeared into the woods along a by-road that leads up to the Rennstieg, the main thoroughfare. In the neighborhood of the ruins of a chapel, where to-day a sparkling spring gushes forth,

\* On the road between Frankfort and Cassel, and not far from Fulda.

close to "Luther's beech-tree," a company of armed men suddenly burst out of the woods. As soon as one of Luther's companions, his brother monk, saw them, he jumped out of the wagon and fled, without a word of farewell.

The armed horsemen surrounded the wagon, commanded the driver to halt, and seized Luther. They allowed his other companion and the driver to continue on their journey. Then, throwing a cloak about Luther, they mounted him upon a horse, and led him about the woods until night set in. It was nearly midnight when the heavy drawbridge of the Wartburg Castle, near Eisenach, was lowered, and when across it rode a weary traveller, to be received within its sheltering walls.

## CHAPTER X.

### LUTHER ON THE WARTBURG.

THE news of Luther's capture spread with great rapidity. Neither friend nor enemy knew what had become of him, whether he were dead or yet alive. Even the warden of the gate of the Wartburg Castle was under the impression that an unknown offender had been caught on the road and securely lodged.

"Is he yet alive, or have they assassinated him?" asks the famous painter Albrecht Dürer,\* as he continues his daily memorandum, saying, "This I do not know; but if dead, then he has suffered for the sake of Christian truth, and because he has punished the unchristian papacy that resists the freedom of Christ with its grievous burdens and human enactments. O God, if Luther be dead, who will henceforth so clearly proclaim to us the Gospel! O God, what could he not have written during the next ten or twenty years? O all ye pious Christian people, assist me to lament the loss of this inspired man, and to pray God that he send us another illuminated man!"

Yet even the enemies of Luther could not rejoice.

\* Albrecht or Albert Dürer was born in Nuremberg May 20th, 1471, and died there April 6th, 1528. As engraver and painter, he was one of the most remarkable men of his age. He embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, and in his last and grandest works, life-size figures of the apostles John and Peter, and Mark and Paul, he is said to have entreated his countrymen to stand fast in the new faith.

Now that he was believed to be dead it was seen how greatly the people honored him, and how deep an impression his teachings had already produced. One of his enemies wrote to the Archbishop of Mayence (Mainz) : “ We have gotten rid of Luther, as we desired ; but the people are so much excited about it that I fear we shall scarce escape with our lives, if we do not everywhere seek him with lanterns and call him back again.”

In the meanwhile, in the month of May, the imperial edict against Luther had been proclaimed. In this he is declared to be cut off from the Church of God, as a hardened schismatic and a notorious heretic. Under penalty of punishment for high treason, and of the imperial ban and outlawry, it was forbidden to harbor and lodge, to entertain and nourish him, or to afford him help or support, secretly or openly, in word or deed, in any way whatsoever ; but on the contrary, to seize him wherever found, and to deliver him to his Imperial Majesty. “ No one shall buy or sell, read or retain his books ; but they shall be blotted out of the memory of man.”

In so severe and violent a manner did the Edict of Worms proceed against Luther, but without accomplishing anything. No one seemed to pay the least attention to it, and it was soon discovered that nothing would be gained even if Luther were removed.

During this time, Luther was securely lodged in the old burg of the Landgraves, which in his letters he called his Patmos (Rev. 1: 9), at times his mountain and desert, also his air-castle and home of the birds. He appeared to the inmates as a new knight, under the name of Squire George. He permitted his hair and beard to grow so that his personal appearance was changed. “ You would hardly recognize me,” he writes to Spalatin, “ for I scarcely recognize myself.”

Thus the plan of the Elector Frederick, to conceal Luther for a season and to secure him against persecutions, had well succeeded. Long before its execution the Elector had conceived of this idea, and at Worms he reached a final decision. Spalatin furnishes the following particulars of the event : " My gracious Lord, the Elector, was as yet somewhat faint-hearted, but he loved Martin Luther. He would not act contrary to God's Word, nor would he incur the enmity of the Emperor. And so he conceived the project of retiring Dr. Martin for a little while in hope that the controversy might quietly and peaceably be settled. Hence Luther was informed, on the evening previous to his departure from Worms, of the plan of seizing him, and expressed himself as contented to honor the Elector by humble obedience, although he would rather have gone straight forward without concealment." The commandant of the Wartburg Castle, Hans von Berlepsch, assisted by his friends Burkhard Hund von Wenckheim and Von Altenstein, admirably conducted and successfully executed the seizure and imprisonment of Luther.

The commander of the castle faithfully provided for him. Two pages of honor were in attendance. Whenever he left the burg a trusty and discreet knight accompanied him, and when disposed at any inn to lay aside his sword and to take up his books, to admonish him. On one occasion he joined a hunting party, but took no pleasure in the sport. " I have been on a hunt," he writes to Spalatin, " for the past two days, and have tasted of that bitter-sweet enjoyment of our noble lords ! We got two rabbits and a couple of poor partridges. A worthy occupation, in truth, for idle people ! I continued my theological studies amid the snares and the dogs ; and as much pleasure as I derived from viewing

such sport, the more sympathy and sorrow I had in thinking of the mysterious truth the picture concealed. For the picture teaches nothing else than that the devil, through his godless masters and dogs—the bishops and theologians—secretly hunts and catches the innocent little animals—the common people. It is the picture of simple and believing souls which is thus vividly presented to my sorrowing heart. And once it happened that a poor little rabbit took refuge in the sleeve of my coat lying by the way. The dogs in their pursuit scented its hiding-place, first wounded, and then killed it. Thus the Pope and Satan rage in their efforts to ruin saved souls, without concerning themselves about my labors."

He delighted to roam about the beautiful woods surrounding the castle searching for strawberries. This pastime was conducive to his health, for as late as October of that year (1521) his bodily ailments caused him so much trouble that he at one time intended to leave his asylum and visit Erfurt for medical advice. He passed many a day in melancholy and depression of spirits. At such times he believed himself to be tormented by the Evil One. Thus he relates the following incident: "It was in the year 1521 that I was in Patmos on the Wartburg, alone in my little room, no one being permitted to come to me save two pages of honor who brought me food and drink. They had bought me a bag of hazelnuts, of which I ate from time to time, and which I locked up in a chest. One evening on retiring, I heard some one at the hazelnuts, cracking one after another with force against the rafters; then the noise approached my bed, but I cared little for that. After I had fallen asleep there began such a tumult on the stairway, as if threescore barrels were being thrown down. I arose, went to the stairs, and cried out, 'Art thou here? (meaning the Evil One).

So be it!' I then commended my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said (Psalm viii. 6), 'Thou hast put all things under His feet,' and retired to rest. For this is the best method to expel him (the devil): despising him and calling upon Christ. That he cannot endure." But finally, when Satan exceeded all bounds, as the legend records, Luther threw his inkstand at him, and he never returned again! \*

But neither sickness nor interdict could bend his will or paralyze his working powers. Not long had he been on the burg when he occupied himself with the translation of the Scriptures, as well as with other writings. In a few weeks several works were ready for the press. A treatise "About Confession, and whether the Pope is entitled to command the same," he dedicated to his particular friend and firm patron, Francisco von Sickingen.

Besides commenting upon selected portions of Holy Scripture intended to instruct, comfort, and edify Christian people, Luther sent out many a heavy controversial article from the Wartburg. Thus he directed a vigorous attack upon the Archbishop Albert of Mayence, brother of the Elector of Brandenburg. This Church dignitary, in need of money, had again set up the traffic with indulgences in the city of Halle, establishing a great shrine of relics, and inviting all to visit the same. He had collected a multitude of glorious relics, about nine thousand in number. Among these were remains of saints, a portion of the body of the patriarch Isaac, remnants of manna, pieces of Moses' burning bush, jugs

\* The spot is still shown, in the Luther room of the Wartburg Castle, where the inkstand struck the wall. The plastering, however, has disappeared, being dug out and carried off by vandal visitors.

from the marriage feast at Cana, some of the wine which Christ made of water on that occasion, thorns from Jesus' martyr crown, one of the stones with which Stephen was killed, and many other glorious relics. Against all this abomination Luther wrote a treatise entitled, "Against the Idol in Halle," and sent it to Wittenberg for publication. The Elector Frederick, however, did not favor Luther's attack upon one of the foremost imperial princes, since such a step might provoke a serious conflict and endanger the peace of the Empire. Spalatin informed him of this, to which Luther replied as follows: "I have hardly ever read a more disagreeable letter than your last. First of all, I cannot endure to hear it, that the Elector will not permit my writing against that man of Mayence, nor anything that will disturb the public peace. And yet, if I have withheld the Pope, wherefore should I retreat before his creature?" But a little later on Luther listened to the advice of his friends, and consented that the publication of the treatise should be postponed. Then he sent a written warning to the Archbishop, admonishing him that if the traffic in indulgences were not immediately stopped he would proclaim it to the whole world. He would grant him two weeks' time for a proper answer. After that he would issue his book, "Against the Idol in Halle." Luther received the desired answer, a clear evidence what a mighty power the concealed monk had already developed against the Elector and the Archbishop and Cardinal in Mayence. In his reply the Archbishop said that the cause which led to Luther's treatise was removed. He did not deny that he was a poor, sinful man. He could endure Christian admonition, and hoped to receive grace and strength of God to live according to His will. Luther put but little faith in the statements

of the Archbishop, although he desisted from publishing his treatise.

Above all other writings Luther delighted to work upon his German Church Postils, an explanation of the Gospels and Epistles for Sundays and festival days, which was the first collection of sermons in the German language.

But the finest and ripest fruit of Luther's leisure and seclusion from the world was his translation of the New Testament. It is the principal work and the crown of all his Wartburg labors. He comments upon it as follows: "I will remain here in seclusion until Easter-tide. In the meanwhile I will write the Church Postils, and intend to translate the New Testament into the German tongue, as many of my friends request. O that every city had its interpreter, and that all tongues, hands, eyes, ears, and hearts might concern and busy themselves about this one book! I will translate the Bible, although in so doing I have assumed a task which will exceed my powers. I now perceive what it is to translate, and why up to the present time it has never been undertaken by any one who has subscribed his name. But the Old Testament I will not touch, unless you (meaning the professors and friends at Wittenberg) will assist me. Indeed, if I could have a secret room at Wittenberg I would go there at once, and with your assistance translate the whole of it from the beginning. But I would have such a translation as would deserve to be read by all Christians, for I hope we would be able to present to Germany a better translation than is the Latin version. It is a great work, and worthy of our united labors, since it ought everywhere to be found and to conduce to the general welfare of the people." In two months Luther had completed the translation

of the New Testament. "I translated not only St. John's Gospel," says Luther, "but the entire New Testament, whilst I was in Patmos. And now Philip (Melanchthon) and I have begun to polish it off, and with God's help it will be a fine piece of work. For my fellow-Germans was I born, and them will I serve!" And in order that he might do this right well, he questioned the mother at home, the children in the streets, and the common laborer in the market. The terms of court and palace he could not use, said he. And thus he accomplished the completion of a truly popular, glorious work, which proved to be the foundation and corner-stone of his Reformation labors.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TROUBLES AT WITTENBERG.

"O would that I were in Wittenberg!" sighed Luther, as he was seated at his study-table in his lonely room on the Wartburg. Unrest and longing drew him back to his old circle and sphere of activity at Wittenberg.

In the meanwhile his friends had quietly and faithfully continued the work. They were resigned to the necessary absence of their master when Melanchthon joyfully announced to them, "Our dearest Father still lives." And Luther, in his seclusion, rejoiced to hear of the effective labors of his colleagues, through whose influence the university was visibly prospering. From all parts of Germany, Switzerland, Poland, and from other lands, young men flocked together and labored with zeal and in perfect harmony. A beginning was made to carry out in practice that for which Luther had contended in word. To bring the Church life in accord with the new doctrines was the question of the day.

Luther himself assisted in its solution with counsel and consolation. He was painfully aware of his personal responsibility in the matter, for he acknowledged that it was he who had first lighted the fires. He also felt that he was under special obligations to the congregation at Wittenberg as its teacher and spiritual shepherd. And indeed his counsel was necessary. For a great excitement had arisen, and the strain upon the public mind was daily growing more intense. It happened on this wise.

The first step to be taken in the practical reform movement was to abolish the system of monasticism, and to change the administration of the Lord's Supper so as to conform to the institution of Christ. To this end Karlstadt, one of Luther's colleagues, labored with great zeal. But his restless spirit was not content with the slow development of things. He appeared as a fiery preacher, and, notwithstanding his weak voice and ungainly appearance, he attracted a multitude of hearers. After he had drawn around him a large number of followers, he forcibly entered the castle church one day, drove out the priests that were reading mass, and began a furious destruction of pictures, statues, and altars. He also desired to establish a law making marriage obligatory upon the clergy, and allowing none but married men to be called to Church offices. He proposed to the Elector that private masses should be abolished on his territory. He exhorted monks and nuns to leave their cloisters. The Lord's Supper was to be celebrated according to its original institution, and moreover so that twelve communicants at a time should receive the bread and the wine together. Melanchthon, mild and yielding in his disposition, could not withstand these stormy and violent proceedings. He wrote to Luther that he had entreated Karlstadt to moderate his zeal, but that he alone could not stem the current.

Thereupon Luther, in the attire of a knight, and accompanied by a single servant, secretly returned to Wittenberg. For three days he lodged with his friend Amsdorf,\* none but his most intimate associates knowing

\* Nicholas von Amsdorf was born Dec. 3d, 1483, and died May 14th, 1565. He was one of the most energetic, and at times most violent, of Luther's adherents.

aught of his arrival. After he had comforted his friends and strengthened them by his counsels for their work, he again secretly returned to the Wartburg.

The Elector was not yet willing that Luther should leave his place of refuge. Nor was his presence in Wittenberg absolutely necessary, although scenes of disorder had occurred, and priests and monks had been abused by students and townspeople.

In Zwickau\* numerous disturbances, especially as touching infant baptism, had occurred. Three of the prime movers came to Wittenberg during the Christmas holidays in the year 1521. They were curious fellows in warlike attire. Wonderful experiences did they relate : God had conversed with them ; they could foretell future events ; in short, they claimed to be prophets and apostles ! Melanchthon thought that they were possessed of a particular spirit, whatever be its nature, and that Luther alone could determine its true character. But Luther did not wish to return on that account, especially since it was not the desire of the Elector. He wrote to Melanchthon, and also to his friend Amsdorf, that the prophets of Zwickau should not be heard at once, but that the matter should quietly take its course. An investigation of their claims to a special calling should be held, and their spirits should be tried according to the advice of St. John (I. 4 : 1), whether they be of God. To Luther it looked very suspicious that they should boast of their intimate conversations with God. To the people of Wittenberg Luther wrote a letter reproving them for having

\* Zwickau, a city of Saxony, about sixty miles south-west of Dresden, has a present population of about 30,000. Thomas Münzer, one of the leaders of the Anabaptist disturbances, was pastor here in 1520. The town suffered severely during the Thirty Years' War, its population being reduced from 10,000 to less than 5000.

introduced innovations in connection with the mass, for destroying pictures, etc., all of which were matters of no great consequence, and which faith and love could tolerate.

But when Melanchthon and his friends saw that they could not stem the current alone, they continued to entreat Luther to return. He only could bring help and deliverance. None but he could lead the devastating stream back again into its proper course. Luther finally yielded to these entreaties, though the Elector would not listen to such a proposal. He commanded him to remain on the Wartburg, since in Wittenberg he could not afford him protection. For in the event of his return to the university, Duke George of Saxony in his wrath would demand the immediate execution of the imperial edict. But Luther could no longer be detained. He was impelled to return to his congregation at Wittenberg and with a firm hand to lead the Reformation movement back to its proper channel, and henceforth to guide it in his own spirit.

## CHAPTER XII.

### LUTHER'S RETURN TO WITTENBERG.

ON the 1st of March, 1522, Luther left his cherished refuge which had so securely protected him. From his stopping-place at Borna, near Leipsic, on the second day of his journey from the Wartburg to Wittenberg, he informed the Elector, by letter, of his departure from the castle. This communication, which is a remarkable memorial of faith, reads as follows :

*“ Most August and Honorable Elector and Gracious Sire !*

“ The gracious letter of Your Highness reached me on Friday evening previously to my departure on the following morning. That you wrote with the very best of intentions toward me, needs neither proof nor testimony, for I honor myself by this conviction, so far as human knowledge goes.

“ But for my part I would say, that your Lordship may know, or you may not know—hence be it known unto you—that I have received the Gospel not from men, but from Heaven alone, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore I would be entitled to subscribe myself a servant and an evangelist, as indeed I propose to do henceforth. And that I exposed myself to trial and judgment was not because I doubted the truth, but because of an abundance of humility to attract others to the same. I have done enough for you, in that I vacated my position during the past year, to obey Your Grace. For the

devil knows full well that I did it not for fear. He knew my heart when I arrived at Worms ; for had I known that as many devils were lying in wait for me as there were tiles on the houses, I would nevertheless have joyfully leaped in among them.

“ But now Duke George is not even equivalent to a single devil ! And since the Father of unfathomable mercies hath made us to be lords over death and all devils—and since he hath given unto us the wealth of assurance that we may say unto him, ‘ Abba, Father,’ you may well judge that it would be the highest reproach unto such a Father, did we not believe that we are also lords over Duke George’s wrath. As to myself, I am persuaded, that I would enter into his city, Leipsic—pardon what may seem foolish to you—should it rain nothing but Duke Georges for nine days, and if each one of them were nine times more wrathful than this one. He seems to regard my Lord Jesus Christ as a man of straw, which reproach He, my Lord, and I can suffer for a while. But I will not conceal from you the fact that I have often prayed for and mourned over Duke George, that God might enlighten him. I will once more weep and pray for him, and then never more. And I entreat you also to help and pray that we turn the evil away from him, that—O Lord God !—is controlling him without respite. I would quickly slay Duke George with a single word if any good would come of it.

“ I have written this with the intent that you may know that I am going to Wittenberg under much higher protection than that of the Elector. Nor is it my purpose to ask protection of the latter. On the contrary, I am inclined to think that I can protect the Elector more and better than he can me. Indeed, if I knew that you could and would protect me I would not go to Wittenberg. No sword can

help this cause of mine. God alone can help, without any human co-operation. Therefore, he that has the most faith will be able to afford the most protection. And since I perceive that you are yet weak in the faith, I cannot regard you to be the man who can either protect or save me.

"And since you desire to know what assistance you can render at this time, and are of the opinion that you have done too little, I answer most obediently, that you have already done too much, and that you ought to do nothing more. For God cannot and will not endure our worrying and striving. He will have it all left unto Him, and unto none other. Govern yourself accordingly.

"If you believe this, you will be safe and enjoy peace. But if you do not believe this, then will I believe it, and must see your unbelief torment you with cares, an experience which all unbelievers righteously suffer. And now, since I do not intend to obey your commands, you are blameless before God, whether I am imprisoned or killed. But over against man you are thus to conduct yourself: as Elector you are to be obedient to the superior authority, and suffer His Imperial Majesty to rule in city and country, according to the laws of the empire. You are not to defend me, or to resist or to interpose any hindrance whatsoever against the power that is seeking to capture or to kill me. For no one is entitled to resist the powers that be save He who ordained the same; otherwise it would be rebellion, and against God. Yet I hope you will be controlled by reason, and recognize the fact that you were born of too noble ancestry to become my jailer yourself.

"If you will leave the gate open and assure me of your safe-conduct, in case my enemies or their represen-

tatives should come to fetch me, you will have rendered sufficient obedience. They cannot demand of you more than this, to ascertain Luther's abiding-place. And that they may know without care, or work, or danger, on your part. For Christ hath not taught me to be a Christian to the injury of others. But should they be so unreasonable as to command you to seize me, then I will declare what shall be done. I will secure you, as touching my cause, against danger to body and soul and possessions ; you may believe this, or you may not.

" Herewith I commend you to the grace of God. As to other matters, we shall consider them when it becomes necessary. I have hurriedly finished this letter in order that you may not feel disturbed by the reports of my arrival ; for I must be of comfort and not of injury to every man, if I would be a true Christian. I am now treating with a different man from Duke George ; he knows me right well, and I am also tolerably acquainted with him. If you had faith you would see the glory of God ! But since you have not believed, you have as yet seen nothing. May God be loved and praised in all eternity ! Amen.

" Given at Borna, on Ash Wednesday, A.D. 1522.

" Your Grace's \* obedient servant,

" MARTIN LUTHER."

The course of Luther's journey led him through Jena. Here, at the " Inn of the Black Bear," he met two Swiss students who were on their way to the University of Wit-

\* The repetition of the titles " Your Grace," etc., which occur very frequently throughout the letter, is omitted in the above translation. They add nothing to the meaning, but serve to moderate the boldness of the spirit in which the epistle is written.

tenberg. One of them, John Kessler \* of St. Gall, who afterward figured as a reformer in his native country, has preserved a very pleasing account of their meeting with Luther. His narrative has come down to us, and begins as follows: "While on our journey to Wittenberg, for the purpose of studying the Holy Scriptures, we arrived at Jena, in Thuringia. We sought about town for an inn where we could lodge for the night, but we were everywhere refused; for it was Shrove Tuesday (Fastnacht, carnival night), when not much attention is paid to strangers and pilgrims. We were about leaving the city to seek lodgings in a neighboring village, when we were met at the gates by an honorable gentleman, who addressed us in a friendly manner and desired to know whither we were bound at so late an hour of the day."

After the two students had informed him of their dilemma he showed them the Inn of the Black Bear, where they obtained lodgment for the night.

Then Kessler continues the story: "In the waiting-room of the inn we found a man seated alone at a table poring over a little book that lay open before him. He greeted us kindly, and asked us to be seated at his table [on account of their travel-stained clothing they had seated themselves to one side, on a bench near the

\* John Jacob Kessler was born at St. Gall in Switzerland in the year 1502. He prepared himself for the priesthood at Basel, and continued his studies at Wittenberg. On his return to his native city he renounced his intentions to become a priest, but as a layman rendered good service to the cause of the Reformation. He finally consented to be ordained, at the age of forty, as Protestant minister, and thereafter took a prominent part in developing the interests of church and school in his canton. He died in 1574, aged seventy-two years.

door]. Then he offered us drink, which we could not well refuse. After thus perceiving his friendliness and cordiality, we joined him at his table and ordered some wine, that we might offer to him in return. We took him to be a knight, who, according to the custom of the country, was clad in pants and doublet, without armor, with a little red leather cap on his head, a short sword at his side, his right hand resting on the hilt, the left hand grasping the manuscript. His eyes were black and deep-set, lightening and sparkling like the stars, so that one could hardly look at them for any length of time.

" Soon he began to ask us where we were born, but answered the question himself by saying, ' You are natives of Switzerland, and of what part ? '

" We answered, ' Of St. Gall.'

" Then he remarked, ' If you intend to go to Wittenberg you will find excellent fellow-countrymen there—Jerome Schurf and his brother Doctor Augustine Schurf.'

" "We have letters of introduction to these gentlemen," said we ; and then asked him, ' Sir, can you tell us whether Martin Luther is again at Wittenberg, or if not there where he may be ? '

" "I have been reliably informed," was the stranger's answer, ' that Luther is not in Wittenberg at the present time, but he will soon be there. Philip Melanchthon is there, and teaches the Greek language, and there are others that teach Hebrew. Confidentially, I would advise you to study both Greek and Hebrew, for they are both necessary to understand the Scriptures.' "

The two students declared that they would not rest content until they had seen and heard the man who had attacked priestcraft and the mass. " "We, too, have been preparing for the ministerial office, at the wish of

our parents, and we should like very much to know all about these things.'

"' Where have you studied ? ' asked the stranger.

"' In Basel,' we replied.

"' Well, what is the outlook in Basel ? ' continued he.  
' Is Erasmus still there, and how fares it with him ? '

"' As far as we know, matters are progressing right well in Basel,' we answered. ' Erasmus is still there, but what he is doing is unknown to every one, for he is very quiet and uncommunicative.'

"' But what think they of that man Luther in Switzerland ? '

"' There are, as elsewhere, various opinions entertained concerning him. Some cannot find words enough to praise him, and to thank God that He revealed His truth through him and uncovered error. Others condemn him as an insufferable heretic—especially the clergy.'

"' Methinks these are the priests,' remarked the stranger."

Soon the strange knight became very intimate with the two students. His learned conversation, especially his acquaintance with the Schurf brothers, with Melanchthon and Erasmus, were both surprising and wonderful to them. And their astonishment was still further increased when one of them opened the book that lay upon the table and found it to be a Hebrew Psalter. He replaced it, and the stranger took it up.

"I would willingly lose one of my fingers," said one of the students, "if I could understand that language."

" You may readily acquire it," replied the unknown one, " if you will apply yourself with diligence. I, too, desire to make progress with it, and daily exercise myself in it."

The day had now fairly ended, and thick darkness had

set in. The proprietor of the inn had entered the room and approached the table at which Luther and the two Swiss students were seated. When he observed their ardent desire to learn of the whereabouts of Luther, he remarked, "My dear fellows, had you been here two days ago you would have seen him, for he was seated at this table and in this very place," pointing with his finger to the seat. "We were chagrined at this," continues Kessler in his narrative, "and were angry with ourselves that we had dallied by the way; we blamed the muddy and rough roads that impeded our progress, and then said, 'Nevertheless, we rejoice that we are in the same house and at the same table where he was.' At this the host laughed and walked away."

"After a little while the innkeeper called me out of the room," continues Kessler. "I was frightened and bethought myself of what I had done or was suspected of. But the host said to me, 'Since you so ardently desire to see and hear Luther, know then that it is he that is sitting with you at table.' I was inclined to think that he was imposing upon me, and so I said, 'You would like, no doubt, to fool me, and to satisfy my desires with a counterfeit of Luther.' But he assured me that he was speaking the truth, yet entreated me to act as if I were not aware of it. I returned to the waiting-room, but could not refrain from whispering into the ear of my companion, 'The host tells me that this man is Luther.' But he would not believe it, and replied, 'You have misunderstood him; perhaps he said it was Hutten. And now since his apparel reminded me more of Hutten than of Luther—for Luther was a monk—I was persuaded to believe that the innkeeper said, 'It is Hutten,' for the first syllables of the two names, Luther and Hutten, resemble each other.' "

In the meanwhile two merchants entered the inn, and after they had laid aside their wrappings, one of them placed an unbound book upon the table. The unknown knight asked them for the name and nature of the book. "It is Dr. Luther's Explanation of the Gospels and Epistles, recently printed and published; have you not yet seen it?" remarked one of the traders. "I shall soon receive a copy of the work," replied the stranger. Just then the host approached and invited them all to supper. "But we requested him," says Kessler, "to allow us to eat by ourselves, evidently not feeling able to pay for a full meal. 'My dear fellows,' said the innkeeper, 'I will provide for you according to your means; come and be seated.' When the stranger heard these remarks, he added, 'Come and eat; I will settle the bill with our host.'

"Whilst at table his conversation was so friendly and blessed that we paid more attention to his words than to our victuals. He spoke of the impending imperial diet at Nuremberg, but did not think much would come of it, since the noble lords would rather spend their time upon expensive tournaments, sleighing parties, and idle display, than hear the Word of God. 'But I hope,' said he, 'that the pure truth and God's Word will bring more fruit among our children and posterity than it does among their parents, in whom error is so deeply rooted that it cannot be removed.'

"The merchants also expressed their opinion, the older one of the two saying, 'I am a simple-minded, straightforward layman, and do not understand much about these quarrels. But as the thing appears to me, Luther is either an angel out of heaven or a devil out of hell. I would willingly spend ten florins here, for his sake, if I could confess unto him, persuaded, as I am,

that he could and would well enlighten my conscience.'

"In the meanwhile the host drew near to us and quietly whispered, 'Do not be concerned about the payment of the meal; Martinus (meaning Luther) has arranged for that.' At this we were much rejoiced, not because of the money, nor because of the enjoyment of the meal, but because this man had treated us as his guests. After the supper the merchants left the inn to attend to their horses, leaving us alone with the unknown one in the waiting-room. We thanked him for the evening meal, and gave him to understand that we took him to be Ulrich von Hutten.

"'I am not the man,' he replied; and to the inn-keeper, who at that moment entered the room, he remarked, 'I have been created a nobleman this evening, for these Swiss students take me to be Ulrich von Hutten.'

"'You are not he,' replied the host, 'but you are Martin Luther.' At this he laughed in high glee, saying, 'These take me to be Hutten; you regard me as Luther; soon I shall be called Martinus Marcolfus.'

"Thereupon he invited us to drink with him a friendly and parting blessing. And as I was about taking a glass of beer he proffered me a glass of wine, saying, 'You are unaccustomed to beer, drink the wine.'

"Then he arose, and throwing his tabard over his shoulders he took leave of us, grasping us by the hand and saying, 'When you reach Wittenberg present my greeting to Doctor Jerome Schurf.'

"'We shall willingly do so,' we replied, 'but from whom shall we say does the greeting come?' Whereupon he concluded:

"'Tell him simply this: He that cometh, sends his

greeting.' With this final word he parted from us and retired to rest."

The merchants, returning to the room, resumed their social intercourse, and continued their inquiries concerning the unknown guest. The innkeeper still held him to be Luther, and the merchants at length were persuaded to believe him; but they were worried about their awkward remarks in his presence. They concluded to arise betimes, and to beg his pardon; and this they did.

They found him in the stable early in the morning, presented their apology, and received the following reply: " You said last evening that you were willing to spend ten florins on Luther's account to be permitted to confess to him; if you should ever confess to him, then you will see and know whether or not I am Martin Luther." With this he mounted his horse and rode toward Wittenberg.

" Upon our arrival in Wittenberg we presented our letters of introduction to Dr. Jerome Schurf. And when we entered the reception room we beheld Martin Luther, the same man whom we had seen in the inn at Jena. And in his company were Philip Melanchthon,\* Justus Jonas, Nicholas Amsdorf, and Doctor Augustine Schurf, recounting to him the events which had transpired in Wittenberg during his absence from the university. Luther

\* Philip Melanchthon has been aptly termed the second leader of the Protestant Reformation. He was born at Bretten, in Baden, in 1497, and died at Wittenberg in 1560. His family name was Schwarzerd (black earth), but his uncle, the famous Reuchlin, translated it into Greek, and hence Melanchthon. He was pre-eminently the scholar and theologian as Luther was the hero and the advocate of the Reform movement. Modest, gentle, and peaceful, he supplemented Luther's fiery zeal and determined will. To the end of his life his fervent prayer was for the unity of Christian believers.

greeted us, and, smiling, pointed at Philip Melanchthon and said : ‘ This is he of whom I spake unto you.’ The latter then conversed with us, inquiring about many things, upon which we informed him to the best of our knowledge. And thus we passed the day with these men, to our great delight.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION.

AFTER Luther returned to Wittenberg the excitement soon subsided, and order was restored. With a firm and steady hand he laid hold upon the control of affairs. He again made his residence in the monastery, and exchanged his knight's attire for the monk's cowl, which he did not finally lay aside until two years thereafter. For eight days in succession he preached against the disturbers of the peace with marked power and great success. He exhorted all to maintain love and concord, and that believing Christians should treat one another, as God had treated them, in love, which love they enjoyed by faith. He pointed out the difference between things necessary and things permissible, and instructed his hearers upon the administration of the Lord's Supper and upon Confession. And thus in a short time the storm was allayed.

He did not spend much time upon the prophets of Zwickau. He allowed them to present their cause, and then said that nothing which they had offered was founded upon the Holy Scriptures, and that their views were but the pernicious suggestions of a deceitful spirit and the imagination of inquisitive dispositions. "I have also detected them in obvious falsehoods," writes Luther. "And when they endeavored to evade my statements with miserably smooth words, I commanded them to substantiate their teachings with miracles, of which they

boasted even against Scripture. They refused to do so, but threatened that I would yet be obliged to believe them. Thereupon I charged their god not to perform any miracles against the will of my God, and thus we separated." On the same day they left Wittenberg, and afterward sent a letter to Luther full of reviling and imprecation.

After peace and order had been restored in Wittenberg, upon invitation of John,\* brother of the Elector Frederick, Luther proclaimed his doctrines in Zwickau, Borna, Erfurt, and Weimar. He resumed the delivery of his university lectures, and also devoted himself to literary labors and controversial writings. He entered upon a severe conflict with Henry VIII., King of England, who in reply to Luther's treatise about the Babylonian Captivity had written a book entitled "Defence and Administration of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther." For this he received from the Pope the honorary title of "Defender of the Faith."

In the course of the year (1522) there appeared Luther's German version of the New Testament. It had been finished on the Wartburg, revised with the aid of Melanchthon and issued from the press on the 21st of September. Thousands eagerly called for it, in spite of the high selling price, one and a half florins.† In no

\* John the Constant was born in 1468, and died in 1532. He was the personal friend and ardent supporter of Luther and the Reformation. He succeeded his brother Frederick as Elector of Saxony, in the year 1525.

† The florin was originally a silver coin of Florence, first coined there in the twelfth century. The name was adopted in different European countries and applied to gold and silver coins varying in value, the single florin being worth from about 25 to 50 cents. Estimating the purchasing power of money then at double what it is now, a copy of Luther's Testament would have cost \$1.50.

other way was the gospel so generally diffused and the cause strengthened as through the Holy Scriptures, which could now be read by all classes of the people. The Roman Catholic Church recognized the danger, and immediately prohibited its circulation.

One of the most violent enemies of Luther writes as follows : “ In a marvellous manner did the printers multiply the copies of Luther’s New Testament, so that cobblers and women, and every layman acquainted with German letters, most eagerly read it as the source of truth, and by frequent reading impressed it upon their memory. Many indeed presumed to obtain so much knowledge within a few weeks that they ventured to dispute about the faith and the Gospel with masters and doctors of sacred Theology ; for Luther has long taught them that even Christian women are priests, and indeed that every one that is baptized is as much a priest as Pope, bishop, and presbyter. The great mass of Lutherans give themselves a great deal more trouble to learn the Scriptures thus translated than do the Catholic people, who let the priests and monks attend to that.”

In the same year portions of the Old Testament, such as the five books of Moses, were finished and issued in parts. Additional portions were published in 1524. But the work of translating the prophets delayed the issue of the whole Bible for several years.

Leo X. was dead, and a new Pope, Adrian VI.,\* had

\* Pope Adrian VI. was born in 1459, became Pope in 1522, and died in 1523. He is said to have been the son of an obscure mechanic of Utrecht, named Boeijens. The simplicity of his court, his attempted ecclesiastical reforms, and his humble acknowledgment of errors in the Church gave great offence to the clergy. In one of his published works he held that a Pope might err even in matters of faith.

ascended the papal throne. Earnest and severe in disposition, he sought most emphatically to crush Luther's heresy, which, in spite of ban and edict, was making continual progress. Nor did he hesitate to attack Luther's personal character, and to heap abuse upon him. Luther was not disturbed at this; he was accustomed to call Adrian "the jackass!" At the meeting of the Imperial diet in Nuremberg (1522) Adrian met with no favor. He was plainly told that the numerous abuses of the papal court and of the Roman clergy, by means of which the German people were insufferably burdened, were the main causes why the Pope's decrees and Emperor's edicts against Luther could not be enforced. At the same time a free council of the universal Christian Church was demanded.

The Pope now addressed a violent communication to the Elector, abounding in serious threats. "Did I but know of a way," writes Luther, "how to deliver the Elector out of all this difficulty, without reproach to the Gospel, I would not spare my life. One year ago I anticipated losing my life for the cause, and I thought that this might be the way of deliverance for him. But now, since we are not able to fathom and comprehend God's plans, we shall rest in safety when we say: Thy will be done. And I doubt not that the Elector will escape unharmed so long as he does not openly confess and approve of my cause. But God alone knows why he must bear my shame. This much, however, is certain, that it will do him no harm; on the contrary, it will be his greatest blessing." The next Imperial Diet, held in 1534, likewise refused to proceed against Luther, as demanded by the new Pope, Clement VII., a counterpart of Leo X. But the Elector entertained the hope that all would yet peacefully unite upon Luther's doctrine.

The influence of Luther's activity was everywhere felt. Many noblemen and a number of cities espoused his cause, and called Lutheran pastors. Among the former was Albert, Earl of Mansfeld. Among the latter, Magdeburg, Frankfort, Nuremberg, Ulm, Strasburg, Breslau, and Bremen. In Saxony Zwickau, Altenburg, and Eisenach headed the list. But the first country that, as a whole, accepted the evangelical teachings was Prussia, the land of the Teutonic Knights.\* Albert of Brandenburg, the grand-master of the order, brother of the Elector of Brandenburg, corresponded with Luther, and also, through oral communication with him, became well grounded in the evangelical doctrines. He, together with two bishops, George von Polenz and Erhard von Queiss, accepted Luther's doctrine. The dominion of the order was converted into a civil government, and its grand-master became Duke of Prussia.

Thus there was erected in the north-eastern part of Germany a firm bulwark of Protestantism. But at the same time there arose violent and bloody persecutions of the Lutherans. The Emperor was not favorably disposed. In the Netherlands cruel punishments were inflicted, and elsewhere the zealots of Romanism were also active. The greater the number of adherents secured by the new doctrines, the sharper were the issues drawn and the more determined the opposition. Many that in the beginning

\* The Teutonic Knights were a religious and military order which originated during the crusades. It acquired extensive landed possessions in the north-eastern part of Germany in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and reached its greatest prosperity in the fifteenth century, when its territory extended from the River Oder to the Gulf of Finland. Internal dissensions, a spirit of luxury, and warfare with the Kings of Poland completed its downfall in the sixteenth century.

favored Luther's teachings, afterward withdrew their support, so firmly were they attached to old forms and usages. Thus, for example, Luther's old friend and spiritual adviser, John von Staupitz, retired to Salzburg. To him there was nothing at stake in the Reformation movement of so much importance that the peace and the unity of the Church should be endangered. This alienation and retirement of his paternal friend painfully affected Luther. But with equanimity he endured the attack of Erasmus,\* who in the beginning had apparently supported him. He regarded him as a man possessed of a superficial, worldly mind, and blind to the highest truths of salvation.

But Luther was now less concerned about controversy than he was about the work of planting and building. His chief aim was to have the Word of God proclaimed in the congregations, so that the latter might be built up with faith and prayer, petition and thanksgiving. In this sense he proceeded to reform the order of service, excluding all unchristian additions. To make good this loss he endeavored to secure real German church chorals. He besought his friends to transpose the Psalms for this purpose, he himself setting the example. In the year 1524 there appeared in Wittenberg the first German hymn-book, consisting of eight hymns, among them the one beginning, "Now, rejoice, ye Christian people." In the preface he remarks: "I am

\* Erasmus was born in Rotterdam 1467, and died in Basel 1536. He was the foremost linguist of his times, and indirectly aided the Reformation as a scholar rather than as a thinker. He pursued a middle course, agreeable to neither party—in favor of reforming the vices of the clergy, but opposed to doctrinal changes or reforms. He was timid in disposition and compromising in character.

not of the opinion that all the arts should be suppressed by the Gospel, and should perish, as several high ecclesiastics maintain; but I would rather that all the arts, especially music, should be enlisted in the service of Him who has created them and bestowed them upon us." And he was forced to view with deep regret the arts and sciences endangered by those intemperate fanatics, who, in their false zeal, would have destroyed all the external decoration of the churches.

He also greatly emphasized the need of the correct training and the proper instruction of the young. He published a treatise in 1524, entitled, "To the Councillors of all the cities in Germany, to establish and maintain Christian Schools." And thus there went out from him an influence which has had the most powerful, glorious, and far-reaching effect. Luther was not only the renewer of the religious life of the German people, but he was also the father and creator of its common schools, that gigantic tree whose branches have spread over all Germany—and it may fairly be said over all Protestantism—scattering blessings over all classes of society, to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DARK CLOUDS.

BUT a new danger threatened the cause of the Reformation. It did not proceed from its outward foes, nor even from the imperial or papal powers, but from its own adherents. "All my enemies heretofore," writes Luther, "as hard as some have pressed me, have not hurt me as much as have some of our own people."

But above all others did Karlstadt's\* behavior occasion him care and sorrow. Upon Luther's return from the Wartburg, Karlstadt openly maintained peace and order, but secretly favored the fanatics of Zwickau. The parish of Orlamünde, a dependency of Wittenberg, becoming vacant, Karlstadt took possession in his own name and right, and began to introduce reforms. Pictures and crucifixes were removed from the church and destroyed. He taught his own views, and carried out his own practices relative to the Lord's Supper, and endeavored to enforce many Old Testament teachings. Thus, he

\* Andrew Rudolph Bodenstein was born in Karlstadt, Franconia, and, according to the custom of the times, he added the birthplace to his name, and was known by the former. He was somewhat older than Luther. He studied at Wittenberg, secured his academical degrees, and obtained a professorship in the same institution. After his expulsion from Germany he lived for a while at Strasburg and Zürich, and was subsequently appointed professor in the University of Basel, which position he held until his death in 1541.

forbade the paying and taking of interest on money loaned, and even went so far as to recommend the introduction of the system of polygamy as practised by the ancient Hebrews.

Spiritually related to Karlstadt was Thomas Münzer.\* In the year 1523, about Easter-tide, he had managed to secure the parish of Allstedt. His object was to set up a kingdom of saints on earth, with external power and pomp. He proposed to destroy the godless and the tyrannical, appealing to the Word of the Old Testament, in which the chosen people of God were obliged to extirpate the heathen inhabitants of the promised land, to destroy their altars and burn their idols. And, like Karlstadt, he also preached communism. Whoever among the princes or nobles would not consent to this arrangement should be decapitated or hanged. His principal associate was the former monk, Pfeiffer of Mühlhausen. Münzer accused Luther of a free-and-easy, carnal life. The latter retorted, "Let them alone to preach what they will ; if any be led astray, it happens as in war, where there is conflict and battle, some will be wounded and fall." Antichrist must be destroyed without the sword. Christ contends with the Spirit. So thought Luther. But when he heard that Münzer and his followers intended to use force, he desired the authorities to intervene and to say, "Desist from the use of force ; the power is ours ; otherwise, leave the country."

At the request of the Elector, Luther undertook a journey, in the year 1524, to Weimar, Jena, and

\* Thomas Münzer was born in 1490, at Stolberg, in the Harz Mountains. In early youth he developed an adventurous disposition, which clung to him until death.

Orlamünde.\* At Weimar he wrote and sent a communication to the council and congregation at Mühlhausen, warning them against Thomas Münzer. In Jena, where he again lodged at the Inn of the Black Bear, he delivered a sermon directed against insurrection and iconoclastic destruction. Here also he met Karlstadt, and held a stormy interview with him. He accused him of being in league with the fanatical "new prophets," and demanded of him that he should openly write and preach against them. Karlstadt complained, on the other hand, that Luther had treated him too vehemently, and that he had classified him with the rebellious and murderous spirits.

After this interview Luther continued on his journey, by way of Kahla and Neustadt, to Orlamünde, headquarters of Karlstadt. But he accomplished nothing here ; he narrowly escaped bodily violence. He himself narrates this experience : "When I reached Orlamünde I soon discovered what kind of seed Karlstadt had sown ; for I was greeted with such a blessing as this : 'Depart in the name of a thousand devils, and may you break your neck before you leave the city !'"

Luther reported to the Elector on his return home. As to Karlstadt, he wrote that he had completely gone astray, and that there was but little hope of his restoration. He thought that Karlstadt had always ignored the praise of Christ, and that he would always do so. "His own insane desire for fame and praise has brought him to this. He has proved to be our most dangerous enemy, so that I am inclined to believe the poor, miser-

\* Orlamünde, Weimar, Jena, Kahla, Neustadt, Mühlhausen, and Frankenhausen are all located in Thuringia. Mühlhausen has recently again come into notice as being the birthplace of the elder Roebling, the engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge.

able wretch is possessed of an evil spirit. God have mercy on his sins with which he is offending unto death."

The Elector then determined that Karlstadt must leave the country. He complied with this order, going first to Strasburg, and thence to Basel. From the latter city he issued a number of pamphlets against Luther, in which he terms him a double papist and a friend of Antichrist. Luther replied with a pamphlet entitled, "Against the Celestial Prophets." He warned against them because they taught without authority, and because they avoided and were silent upon the principal part of Christian doctrine, viz., how we should be delivered of our sins, obtain a good conscience, and a happy heart at peace with God. On the other hand, they frightened and deceived the conscience with new and curious teachings.

And in a short time the harvest of the seed which the false prophets had sown was fully ripe, and the storm broke with fury.

Münzer, after having preached insurrection in southwestern Germany, arrived in Mühlhausen. By means of his public addresses and specious promises he attracted and attached the people to himself. A parish was given him, and a new magistrate, favorable to his cause, was appointed. From the regions round about the peasants swarmed in throngs to hear the new revelations. Münzer soon became, as Luther said, both king and emperor of Mühlhausen!

Among the peasants the elements had been in a disturbed condition for some time past, and now a fearful storm was gathering. In South Germany an insurrection broke out, extending east and west, and also northward into the central parts. The demands of the

peasants were summed up in twelve articles, many of which were moderate and just in their terms. Thus they demanded that each congregation should possess the right to choose its own pastor. Henceforth they did not wish to be considered as serfs, but treated as free-men, because Christ had redeemed all with His own blood. When Luther heard of these Twelve Articles, he wrote "An Admonition to Peace in Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia." He directs his statements at first to the princes and nobles, and says that they, and especially the blind bishops, mad priests and monks, are to blame for this mischief and insurrection, because they do not cease to rave and rage against the holy Gospel; and that in their secular governments they did nothing but assess and extort, displaying their pride and splendor to such an extent that the common laboring man could endure it no longer. They could not lay the blame of this upon the Gospel, for he had always contended against insurrection and had exhorted to obedience even against tyrannical authority. He therefore entreated them to heed his warning, not to despise this revolt, and yet not to fear the peasants; but rather that they should fear God and for His sake make some concessions, and treat the peasants as one would drunken and erring men, in a kindly spirit, for kindness never suffers any loss.

But the peasants he admonished not to think of their right or power, nor even of the wrongs they had suffered. He warned them against abusing the divine Name, quoted passages from God's Word concerning the rights and powers of the ordained authorities, and showed that the excuse sometimes offered, that the government was a bad one, could in no wise justify conspiracy and rebellion. They might do what God did not forbid, but they should

not bring disgrace upon the Christian name, nor make it the sinful cloak of their impatient, contentious, and unchristian undertaking. For true Christians did not contend with the sword nor with guns, but with the cross and affliction. In fact, with the exception of the first article, their demands had nothing in common with the Gospel. And if they persisted in their revolt they would be worse enemies of the Gospel than Pope and Emperor.

But the peasants persisted in their insurrection. "Hardly do I look about me," said Luther, "when they come to blows, steal and rage, and act like raving dogs; but especially violent is that arch fiend that rules at Mühlhausen" (Münzer). The latter had marched out, on the 26th of April, 1525, with four hundred armed men, to do battle for the Lord, as he said. Multitudes flocked to his standard. Cloisters and castles were reduced to ashes. And as yet the princes and nobles were not sufficiently strong to encounter and subdue them.

Amid these lawless disorders the Elector died in peace, May 5th, 1525. "Under his firm protection" says Luther, "the Gospel everywhere happily gained the day. His name and his great reputation exerted a good influence. And since he was a wise and prudent prince, no one could accuse him of harboring heresy or protecting heretics in his realm. He was a child of peace, and peacefully did he enter into rest." Luther had charge of the funeral arrangements. All superstitious ceremonies were excluded. Before his interment Luther delivered two sermons in the castle church at Wittenberg. To Duke John, the successor of Frederick the Wise, he wrote: "It looks as if God had purposely removed him, as he did King Josiah, that he might no longer behold the wickedness of the world. During his whole life he governed in a

quiet and peaceful manner, well meriting his name, Frederick, in word and deed. And such peaceful souls are not to be begrimed that they no longer live in this unrest and strife ; for they would occasion us more misery did we see them passing their last days amid such turmoil."

But when the revolt and the lawless proceedings of the peasants grew worse, Luther issued an address "Against the Plundering and Murderous Hordes of Peasants." Among other things he said : that the peasants had merited death in body and soul because of their atrocious sins ; that they had sworn to be faithful and true to their superiors, but that they had broken their vows of obedience in a wanton and mischievous manner ; that they instigated insurrections and plundered cloisters and castles like highway robbers ; and that they endeavored to cover up such fearful sins with the Gospel, calling themselves Christian brethren, and obliging people to join them in their outrages. Luther exhorted all Christian authorities to take up the sword against these mad peasants. They should be of good courage and use force with a clear conscience. Whoever would fall on the side of law and order would be a true martyr in the sight of God, because he would be acting in the pathway of obedience to the Divine Word. Another reason to justify vigorous action on the part of the authorities was the circumstance that the peasants compelled many pious people to join their infernal league. "To save these poor souls, let every one who can, strike and slay."

On the 15th of May, 1525, Münzer's army of eight thousand men was completely defeated in the battle of Frankenhausen in Thuringia. He himself was captured and executed. Shortly before this the principal army of the Swabian peasants was entirely destroyed. Soon the re-

volt was suppressed. The atrocities of which the peasants had been guilty were oftentimes fearfully avenged.

Luther's enemies were soon ready to charge him with the blame of these atrocities. They maintained that his treatise against the peasants was severe and unchristian, alleging that he had preached the shedding of blood without mercy. Even among his friends many were offended. Luther vindicated himself in his "Letter about that severe Book against the Peasants," in which he declared, that if he had advised the slaying of the rebellious peasants without mercy, he certainly did not teach that the prisoners should receive no mercy. Nor would he defend the acts of infuriated tyrants, nor commend their ravings.

And over against the accusations that he himself had incited this conflagration, he could say, "I am of the opinion that no teacher ever wrote so powerfully in favor of the civil authority, for which even my enemies are indebted to me. And who stood up more resolutely against the peasants, with sermons and in writings, than did I?"

## CHAPTER XV.

### LUTHER'S MARRIAGE.

THE step that Luther now took afforded his enemies both material and opportunity for libellous reproaches. In 1524 he had laid aside his monk's cowl and assumed a black ministerial coat. Releasing himself from his monkish vows, he entered into the marriage state on the 13th of June, 1525, at the age of forty-one years.

While he was sojourning on the Wartburg he rejected the very suggestion of such a step. "Good God!" wrote he, "our Wittenberg friends are furnishing their monks with wives; but they shall not force any upon me." And to Melanchthon—to whom he had recommended a wife—he jokingly asked whether he would avenge himself upon Luther by returning the favor; if so, he would be on his guard. Many of his friends and fellow-laborers had already married. And many inquired if Luther did not contemplate taking unto himself a wife. But as late as the 30th of November he wrote: "I am far removed from marrying, for I daily anticipate death and the well-merited punishment of a heretic." And now he took unto himself a wife! He explained his action by saying, "The Lord fairly threw me into the marriage state at a time when I was of a contrary opinion." He speaks of his intention with positiveness, for the first time, in a letter of May 4th, 1525:

"And if I can accomplish it, to spite the devil, I will marry my Katie before I die, since I hear that the peasants

are continuing their operations. I hope they will not deprive me of my courage and my joy.’’ And to Spalatin he wrote on the 10th of April : ‘‘ I have urged so many others, for various reasons, to marry, that I shall soon be brought to it myself, especially since my enemies do not refrain from condemning such a step, and our ‘wonderfully wise little people’ daily make sport over it.’’ The persuasive efforts of his father must have exerted an influence in leading him to this determination, for it seemed to him as if he had regained his son since he had ceased to be a monk.

On the evening of the 13th of June, 1525, Luther invited his friends—among them Bugenhagen, Jonas, and Lucas Kranach\*—to his dwelling, to witness his marriage with Catharine von Bora. She was born January 29th, 1449, of an old noble family, and as a mere child she had entered Cloister Nimptsch, near Grimma, in Saxony. In the year 1523 she, together with eight other nuns, had escaped from the cloister and had come to Wittenberg. Here she sojourned in the family of Philip Reichenbach, the town-clerk, afterward burgomaster. Many years subsequent to this act, Luther remarked at table, ‘‘ If I had wished to marry some thirteen years ago, I would have taken Eva Schönfeld. My Katie did not love me at the time, for I suspected her to be proud and haughty. But it pleased God that I should have mercy upon her. And I was blessed in the step I took, for I have a pious,

\* Lucas Sunder was born in Kranach, in Bavaria, in 1472, and died in Weimar, Saxony, in 1553. He substituted the name of his birthplace for his family name. As a painter he was distinguished for graceful simplicity, and stood at the head of the Saxon school. He enjoyed the friendship of Luther and the other Reformers at Wittenberg, and frequently introduced them into his pictures.

faithful wife, upon whom a man can depend, and, as Solomon says, she will do me no evil." The wedding ceremony took place in the customary manner. Bugenhagen pronounced them man and wife and added God's blessing. The wedding-rings of Luther and Catharine, the gift of a friend, have been preserved in the museum of Brunswick. They are artistically made, and bear the inscription : "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

In a fortnight thereafter the usual wedding festivities were held, to which Luther invited his parents and friends. From the university Luther received a finely engraved silver tankard, now in possession of the University of Greifswald. The electoral court furnished a roast of venison, and the city authorities a generous supply of wine.

And thus the unprecedented had happened—an expelled monk had married a runaway nun! Great was the talk and the commotion that ensued! Luther's enemies derisively reminded him of the old legend that of such a union antichrist would be begotten. Many of his best friends, Melanchthon among the number, were troubled about his act. And yet it soon appeared that, as in other matters, Luther had shown himself to be a man of firm character, and as one who had done what was right.

In accordance with the order of the Elector, Luther remained in the monastery building, which had been vacated by all the monks. Here Katie established her household. To-day this stately dwelling still stands, close to the gate and to the city walls, altered within, but firm and towering without, a genuine German home, from which have issued streams of blessing for the whole world. His married life has become the

model for many thousands. "From that time," says Gustav Freytag, "the husband, the father, the citizen, became likewise the Reformer of the domestic life of his nation, a pattern for filial reverence, marriage, the training of children, as well as for the social family life—the very blessings of his life on earth, of which Protestants and Catholics may alike partake, have sprung from Luther's marriage."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### LUTHER'S REFORMATORY ACTIVITY.

THE year 1525 characterized an important epoch in Luther's life. A controversy with some of his own adherents had been added to his conflict against Roine. Hitherto his activity had been essentially destructive; from this time forth it must needs be constructive. Over against the fanatics and iconoclasts, as well as the rebellious peasants, it was necessary to establish fixed limits, which could not be transcended without endangering the work of the Reformation. The sad experiences of the past few years did not subdue Luther's spirit—for the consciousness that his cause was of God was to him immovable. Yet his tone was not so confident, his spirit and his words not so bold as in the beginning, when he appealed to the German people. Then, the controversies among the adherents of the Reformation, concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, began to separate them into hostile camps, and even to fill their hearts with bitterness.

And yet Luther daily rejoiced to see the Gospel gaining a firmer foothold and developing itself both inwardly and outwardly. The measures of the Elector John, the successor of Frederick the Wise, contributed largely to this result. As chief ruler of the country he showed a willingness to establish a new order of things in the Church, according to the fundamental principles of the Gospel. In these efforts he was powerfully assisted

by the Landgrave, Philip of Hesse. By means of such assistance on the part of the ruling princes the cause of the Reformation not only grew stronger in itself, but also as against the Emperor and the imperial princes. But for this new church structure there was demanded less boldness and more persevering patience and a reverent conservatism.

And still in another direction the picture suffered a change. In place of the monk's cowl the habit of the citizen was assumed. Because of this the heart of the German people went out to the great Reformer. As a struggling monk he excited wonder and surprise. But as a husband and father he is loved and revered by the German people. In the times of conflict and development his life was productive of far-reaching experiences and marvellous occurrences. But henceforth a more peaceable career was unfolded, even if numerous conflicts and temptations had still to be endured.

His constructive activity first of all was devoted to the arrangement of the order of Divine Service. Much had already been accomplished in this direction. The congregation took part in the singing of German hymns, but the liturgical services were yet conducted in Latin. Luther established a full order of service in German, and published the new liturgy in a book entitled "The German Mass (Communion) and Order of Service as established at Wittenberg." But he declared explicitly that it was not his intention to oblige all Germany to adopt this order of service. He had in mind another kind of evangelical service, which should be simply composed of the Word and Prayer, and ordered in love. "But as yet," said he, "the people are wanting to carry out such an order of service." He will wait "until the Christians are found who will earnestly

accept of the Word and firmly exercise it ;" otherwise a factious sect might grow out of it, if he were to carry out his own notions. For the Germans are an intractable people, with whom it is not easy to begin a new movement unless they are impelled by necessity.

Having finished the work of establishing an order of divine service in German, he next turned his attention to a reform of the parishes. On the anniversary of the 95 Theses, in the year 1525, he submitted the following to the Elector : " Two things yet remain to be done, which demand from your Grace, as the ruling civil authority, order and oversight. The one thing is the miserable condition of the church parishes ; the other, that the Elector should order an investigation of the civil administration of his councillors and other officials, because of the complaints preferred against them in city and country."

The Elector agreed to carry out these wishes, but more than a year elapsed before the matter was thoroughly taken in hand. In November, 1526, Luther again presented the question to the Elector, and maintained that the cities and towns that were able should be obliged to maintain schools and churches, as much so as their bridges, highways, and other necessary arrangements of civil life. The ruling prince should have the sole right to dispose of the monasteries and endowed institutions, and the duty of governing such establishments should devolve upon him, for otherwise no one would care for them. At last, in February, 1527, this matter was earnestly taken in hand, and inspectors appointed. In the month of July the first general inspection was made in Thuringia.

The political situation in Germany contributed no little to the development of the Reformation cause.

The Emperor was hard pushed by France and by Turkey. He could not think of executing the Edict of Worms in all its severity. At the imperial diet of Spire (1526) the resolution was passed that until a general council of the Christian Church be held, or at least until a German national council could meet and decide, each member of the diet should live, govern, and conduct himself in matters pertaining to the said edict, in view of his accountability to God and His Imperial Majesty.

While the cause of the Reformation was thus peaceably making good progress and establishing itself firmly both inwardly and outwardly, Luther was sorely afflicted in body and soul—just after “his dear Katie, by the grace of God, had presented him with a boy, Hans Luther, on the 7th of June, 1526.”

In January, 1527, he was attacked by a violent rush of blood to the heart, which well-nigh killed him. But happily, the attack soon passed over. Then he was overcome by anxious forebodings. Great anguish of soul seized upon him, and then followed another rush of blood to the heart.

Concerning the spiritual temptations, Luther says that they were severer and more dangerous than the bodily weakness which overcame him. “And when the spiritual temptation had passed away, early on Saturday morning,” thus relates Luther’s friend, Bugenhagen,\*

\* John Bugenhagen, known as Dr. Pommer, or Pomeranus, was born near Stettin in 1485, and died in Wittenberg in 1558. He founded a high school at Belbuck in Pomerania, and started the work of the Reformation. He joined Luther in 1521, being appointed shortly thereafter professor in the university and pastor of the principal church. He became one of the foremost workers of the cause, operating as reformer in Church and school in Germany and Scandinavia.

"the pious Job feared that if the hand of God should again return so strongly he would not be able to endure it, and imagined that the Lord Jesus Christ was about calling him home."

"And so he sent his servant to me early in the morning, bidding me to come to him in haste. Since he said 'in haste' I was surprised, but found the Doctor appearing as usual, standing by the side of his wife, with a quiet and retiring disposition, commanding all things to God. For he was accustomed not to bring his complaints before men that could not help him, and whom he also could not help with his complaints. I asked the Doctor why he had sent for me. 'Not because of any evil thing,' answered he.

"After we had ascended to the upper part of the house and had reached a retired spot, he began with great earnestness to acknowledge and confess his sins. The master then desired from his pupil comfort out of the Divine Word—that is, deliverance and absolution from all his sins ; he also asked that I should pray for him, which I likewise desired of him. He requested permission, on the following Sunday, to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ ; he hoped to preach on that day, and did not seem to be concerned about the attack of sickness on the previous afternoon ; he then immediately remarked, 'If God will call me now, His will be done.' I was astonished at this and other statements. After he had confessed and had conversed about the spiritual temptations that had befallen him that morning, with utterable fear and trembling, he continued : 'Many think because at times I manifest a very happy disposition that my pathway is strewn with roses. But God knows what experiences I have had. I have often resolved, for the sake of the world, to mani-

fest a more serious and holy disposition (I hardly know what to call it); but God has not thus endowed me. Thank God, the world cannot truthfully charge me with any vice or immorality, and yet it is offended because of me. Daily and earnestly I implore Him to grant me grace that I may not, because of my sins, give any one just cause of offence.'

"It was now noon, and, at the suggestion of his wife, Luther accompanied Bugenhagen to a dinner at the home of one of the nobility. He ate and drank but little, yet was very agreeable to all at table. After dinner he spent several hours with Dr. Jonas\* in his garden, endeavoring to rid himself of his sadness and melancholy. He conversed with the latter upon a variety of subjects, and invited him and his wife to supper. But when Dr. Jonas and his wife arrived at five o'clock, Luther had retired to rest and to refresh himself. He at once arose, but could not remain at table because of the buzzing and ringing in his ears. In company with Dr. Jonas he returned to his room, where a faintness overcame him. He cried out suddenly, 'Oh, Doctor, I am feeling badly; bring me some water, or I shall die.' Frightened and trembling, I hurriedly seized a pail of cold water and dashed some of it into his face and neck as well as I could. In the meanwhile he began to pray: 'Dearest God, if thou hast willed this to be my last hour upon earth, thy

\* Justus Jonas was born in Nordhausen, Saxony, in 1493, and died in Eisfeld in 1555. He studied law and then theology at Erfurt, and became professor at Wittenberg in 1521. He was present at the Diet in Worms, and also in Augsburg. In 1541 he was appointed pastor at Halle, and accompanied Luther on his last journey to Eisleben. At the time of his death he was pastor and superintendent at Eisfeld in Saxony.

gracious will be done.' And lifting up his eyes to heaven, with heart-felt fervency he continued praying, repeating the Lord's Prayer and the sixth Psalm. His wife now appeared, and seeing that he was so deadly faint, she was amazed and called loudly for the servants. He then lay down and longed for rest, but complained of great weakness. We rubbed him, cooled him off, gave him refreshing drinks, and did what we could until the physician arrived. Shortly after that he again commenced to pray, saying: 'O Lord and dearest God, thou knowest how willingly I would have shed my blood for the sake of thy Word ; but perhaps I am not worthy of it ; thy will be done. If thou hast so ordered it, I will gladly die ; but so that thy Holy Name be praised, whether I live or die. But if it were possible, dear God, I would yet wish to live for the sake of thy chosen people. Yet if my last hour has come, do as thou wilt ; thou art Lord over life and death. Dearest God, thou hast led me in my work ; thou knowest that it is thy Word and Truth ; do not permit my enemies to rejoice, and to boast : where is now your God ? But glorify thy Holy Name against the enemies of thy blessed, healing Word. Dearest Lord Jesus, thou hast graciously vouchsafed unto me the knowledge of thy Holy Name ; thou knowest that I believe in thee, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and that I comfort myself with the truth that thou art our Mediator and Saviour. O thou that didst shed thy precious blood for us sinners, support me at this time and comfort me with thy Holy Spirit.' And again he continued : 'Lord, thou knowest that many unto whom thou hast given it have shed their blood for the Gospel's sake. I had hoped likewise to be enabled to shed my blood for the sake of thy Holy Name, but I am not worthy of it ;

thy will be done. Lord, thou knowest that Satan has persecuted me in many ways, seeking to kill me bodily by tyrants, kings, and princes, and spiritually by his fiery arrows and by fearful satanic temptations. But against all their raving and raging thou hast wonderfully preserved me. Preserve me henceforth, thou faithful God, if it be thy will.'

"He then inquired for the physician. We informed him that he would soon be here. In a short time he arrived, applied hot cloths to Luther's body, administered other remedies, and comforted him with the hope that, please God, there was no danger to be apprehended at this time. In the meanwhile Dr. Pomeranus (Bugenhagen), to whom Luther had confessed in the morning, arrived, and anxiously addressed him : 'Dear Doctor, do you also unite with us in praying that you may yet long be spared, a comfort to us and to many others ?' To which Luther replied : 'As for myself personally, to die would be gain ; yet to continue in the flesh is necessary for the sake of many. Dear God, thy will be done.' "

Then turning to both friends (Jonas and Bugenhagen) he said, "Since the world delights in lies, many will say that I retracted my teachings before I died. I therefore desire most earnestly that you will be witnesses to my present confession of faith. I say it with a good conscience, that I have taught from out of God's Word, according to God's command, to which work He has constrained me without my will. I have taught right and wholesome doctrine concerning faith and love, the cross and the sacraments, and other articles of Christian truth. Many accuse me of being too violent and severe in writing against papists and factious spirits, and when I castigate their false teachings, impious living, and hypocrisy. I have indeed been too violent at times and have severely

attacked my opponents, and yet in such a manner that I never regretted it. But whether I have been violent or temperate, I have never sought to inflict an injury, nor to endanger a human soul, but have rather sought the welfare and salvation of every one. I had purposed to write about Baptism, and also against Zwingli and other fanatics, and I have often complained in tears that so many sects and factions have arisen that corrupt and pervert God's Word, and that would not spare His own flock which He has redeemed with His blood. God has bestowed upon me, unworthy that I am, many beautiful gifts, which he has not given to thousands of others, and which I would indeed like to employ to His honor, and for the use and comfort of God's people, if it be His will. You will not be able to contend against so many fanatics that now everywhere show themselves ; yet I comfort myself with this, that Christ is stronger than very Satan."

When the feeling of faintness increased he repeated in his prayer comforting words and passages from the Holy Scripture, which he delivered with a fervent heart and with a firm faith and certain confidence in God's grace and mercy. Not long after this he said to his wife : " My dearest Katie, if God at this time will take me to Himself, I entreat you to be reconciled to His gracious will ; you are my lawful wife—concerning which fact you are to have no doubt. Let the blind, godless world say what it will to the contrary ; govern yourself according to God's Word, and hold fast to the same, then you will have certain and constant comfort against the devil and all his calumniators." Soon he again began to pray. " O my dear Lord Jesus, thou who hast said, ' Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you,' grant unto me, in virtue of this

promise, not gold nor silver, but a strong, firm faith ; let me find, not the desire nor the joy of this world, but comfort and refreshing through His blessed saving Word ; open unto me who am knocking ; nothing do I desire which the world regards as great ; but grant unto me thy Holy Spirit, to enlighten my heart, to comfort and strengthen me in my fear and distress, and to preserve me in the right faith and confidence in thy grace until the end of my life. Amen."

Hot cloths were again applied to warm his chilled body, and after this had been done Luther asked to see his "dear little son Johnnie" (allerliebstes Hängsichen). The child laughingly regarded its father, who said, "O you dear, poor little child ! I commend you, dearest Katie, and you, poor little orphan, to my beloved and faithful God. You are poor, but God, who is a 'Father of the fatherless and a Judge of the widows,' will provide for and protect you." He then conversed with his wife about his silver tankards. She was much frightened and disturbed at these remarks of her husband, but did not manifest her fears outwardly at being obliged to witness his sufferings. On the contrary, she comforted herself by saying, "Dear Doctor (Luther), if it be God's will, I would rather see you with Him than with me. But it is not myself and child alone that are concerned about your life ; many pious Christian people still have need of you. Do not, then, be worried on my behalf ; I commend you to His divine will, and I hope and trust God will graciously preserve me."

When Luther had partially recovered his strength, on the advice of the physician his friends left him to gain much-needed rest. On the following day they found him very much better, and in the evening he was able to arise and dine with them. To Dr. Jonas he then and

there remarked, "I must make a note of yesterday, for I received severe instructions, seated, as it were, in a hot sweat-bath. The Lord leadeth into hell and leadeth out again. The Lord killeth and maketh again alive. For He is Lord of life and death. To Him be thanks, honor, and praise forevermore. Amen."

But the end was not yet. That inward feeling of oppression returned, and even increased in violence. He complained to his friends that he was obliged to endure the severest attacks. To Melanchthon he wrote, in the beginning of August, that for more than a week he was tossed about in heaven and hell, and that he still trembled from the effects of his sickness.

While Luther was thus enduring such grievous sufferings, the plague broke out in Wittenberg. At the command of the Elector the university was removed to Jena. Luther, however, remained with his friend Bugenhagen in Wittenberg, though the epidemic reached his very doors. Luther writes concerning those days: "Thus there are conflicts without and fears within. One comfort, nevertheless, we have, over against the ragings of Satan, and that is the word of God, by which we may save the souls of the faithful, even if Satan should destroy their bodies. Pray for us that we valiantly endure the visitation of God, and overcome the devil's might and craft, be it for life or death. Amen." And shortly thereafter he wrote: "I bear God's wrath because I have sinned before Him. The Pope and the Emperor, the princes and the bishops, yea the whole world hate me. And more than that, my own brethren [those differing from him on the Lord's Supper] torment me. My sins, death, Satan with his angels, rage without end. And what indeed could comfort me should Christ also forsake me, on whose account all my enemies hate

me? But He (Christ) will never forsake a poor sinner like me."

Before the end of the year (1527) the plague had ceased. Luther's infant son Hans recovered from his sickness, and his wife bore him a daughter which was named Elizabeth.

During these troublous times Luther wrote that grand choral, "the Battle-Hymn of the Reformation,"

"EINE FESTE BURG IST UNSER GOTT. \*

1. "A mighty stronghold is our God,  
    A sure defense and weapon ;  
    He helps us free from every need  
        Which hath us now o'ertaken.  
    The old angry foe  
        Now means us deadly woe ;  
    Deep guile and great might  
        Are his dread arms in fight—  
    On Earth is not his equal.
  
2. "In our own strength can naught be done—  
    Our loss were soon effected ;  
    There fights for us the Proper One,  
        By God himself elected.  
    Ask you who frees us ?  
        It is Christ Jesus—  
    The Lord Sabaoth,  
        There is no other God ;  
    He'll hold the field of battle.

\* The English version following is that of Rev. Dr. Joel Swartz. The Rev. Dr. B. Pick has issued a collection of versions, fifty-six in number, in different languages, including Hebrew, Russian, Zulu, etc. It is published by Severinghaus & Co., Chicago, Ill., in pamphlet form.

3. " And were the world with devils filled,  
     All waiting to devour us ;  
     We'll still succeed, so God hath willed—  
         They cannot overpower us :  
         The Prince of this World  
         To hell shall be hurled ;  
         He seeks to alarm,  
         But shall do us no harm ;  
     The smallest word can fell him.
4. " The Word they must still let remain,  
     And for that have no merit ;  
     For He is with us on the plain,  
         By His good gifts and Spirit :  
         Destroy they our life,  
         Goods, fame, child, and wife ?  
         Let all pass amain,  
         They still no conquest gain,  
     For ours is still the kingdom."\*

In the month of October, 1528, the long-prepared and extensive work of inspection was begun. Luther himself took charge of Wittenberg and vicinity, and found the condition of things somewhat favorable. But other sections of the country were not in so good a condition. Thus a contemporary narrates : " Dr. Luther examined the peasants on the subject of prayer, and also in the catechism, and that very gently and patiently ; he also instructed them very kindly in Bible history. On one occasion he required a Saxon peasant to repeat the Creed. He began, " I believe in God the Father Almighty," when Luther stopped him and asked, " What is Almighty ?" The peasant replied, " I do not know." " You are right, my dear fellow," responded Luther;

\* The melody to which this hymn is sung was composed by John Walther, musical director of Torgau, in 1539.

"neither I nor all the learned men can tell what God's power and might is. But do you continue to believe in all simplicity that God is your beloved and faithful Father, who as the Only Wise can and will help your wife and children in every hour of need."

But not only among the common country people, but also among the clergy, did Luther find the densest ignorance. Thus, for example, he found one that could scarcely repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Some had become notorious by their immoral course of life; others had to be enjoined from pursuing secular business, such as keeping saloon and the like occupations. In the country districts but few schools were to be found. This crying need led Luther to prepare his two Catechisms in the year 1529. "Help, dear God!" says he, in his preface to the smaller Catechism. "How much misery have I seen, especially in the country villages, because the common layman knows nothing at all about the Christian doctrines; and many of the clergy are both unapt and unfit to teach. And yet they are all called Christians, have been baptized, and partake of the Lord's Supper, though they know nothing about the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, or the Ten Commandments. They live like cattle and irrational swine, and now that the precious Gospel has come to them they understand how to abuse their liberty in a masterly manner! O ye bishops, how will ye be able to give an account to Christ, that ye have suffered the common people to be degraded in ignorance, and have not given full proof of your ministry? Ye permit of but one kind (bread) in the Communion and enforce your human enactments, but ye care nothing whether the people know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or anything about God's Word. Woe unto your necks forever!" He then admonishes

his fellow-clergymen to have mercy upon the poor people, and to introduce the Catechism among them. And, indeed, next to the Bible, his Catechism, with its pithy, popular language, was most influential in leading to an apprehension and confirmation of the teachings of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONFERENCE AT MARBURG.

IN the fall of 1529 Luther accepted an invitation of the Landgrave Philip of Hesse\* to Marburg. Here a meeting had been called of all the prominent advocates of the Gospel and the Reformation who were opposed to the domination of Rome. An intimate union of all such into one solid phalanx was an urgent necessity. The friends of the Reformation were divided into two hostile camps. This division gave the enemy frequent advantage for attack. By combating and condemning each other the advocates of the Reformation were inviting the overthrow of their cause.

We have already heard Luther express himself, during his severe illness, concerning the Sacramentarians, *i.e.*, those Protestants who differed from him in their views of the Lord's Supper. At their head, as leader, stood Zwingli,† a native of Switzerland. He had developed

\* Among all the German princes of Reformation times, Philip of Hesse was the most talented and energetic. Upon many questions and movements he exercised a determining influence, but not always for the good of the cause. His second marriage, though sanctioned by many theologians, occasioned great scandal. He was born in 1504, and died in 1567.

† Ulric Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, was born at Wildhaus, in the Canton of St. Gall, January 1st, 1484. He studied at Vienna and Basel, and was ordained a priest in 1506, but not until 1516 did he begin to preach the Gospel of the Reformation. In 1518 he was called to the Cathedral of Zürich, which city henceforth

an independent Reformation movement in Zürich, had gained many friends to the cause, and had proclaimed the Gospel throughout his native land. In many important points he was in accord with Luther, but upon one point they disagreed, upon the doctrine of the Holy Communion. Zwingli denied the presence of the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He maintained that the words of Christ, "This is my body," etc., denote, "This signifies my body," etc. He admitted nothing but a spiritual reception on the part of the believer. Luther, on the other hand, maintained that the salvation wrought out by Christ's death was presented to the individual through the distribution of the broken body of Christ under the sensible mediation of bread, and that faith was thereby strengthened. Different explanations concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper had given rise to a violent controversy, and many treatises had been written on both sides of the question. Marburg in Hesse was selected as the place where, it was hoped, the controversy might possibly be settled. Zwingli and his friend Ökolompad\* arrived on the 29th of September, 1529. Luther and Melanchthon, with a few friends, followed on the next day. All were royally entertained

became the center of his reformatory activity. On his return from Marburg he took an active part in the hostilities between the Roman Catholic and Protestant cantons, and died as chaplain on the battle-field of Kappel, October 11th, 1531.

\* John Oekolompad, whose real name is said to have been Hussgen or Heussgen, was born in Swabia 1482, and died in Basel 1531. He studied theology at Heidelberg, and under Erasmus at Basel. For a while he was chaplain to Franz von Sickingen at the Castle of Ebernburg. Called as curate to the Church of St. Martin's in Basel, in 1525, he remained there until his death. He has been termed the Melanchthon of Switzerland.

in the castle and palace of the Landgrave, Philip of Hesse. Luther had reluctantly accepted the invitation, for he anticipated no good result from the interview. Zwingli, on the contrary, had gladly accepted the invitation, and had come filled with joyful expectations that a union could be effected, in spite of a continuance of doctrinal differences. It seemed, therefore, as if everything depended upon Luther.

A friendly and confidential interview having taken place between Luther and Ökolompad on the one hand, and Zwingli and Melanchthon on the other, the great colloquium between these four distinguished theologians was solemnly opened on the 2d of October, 1529, in the presence of the Landgrave, his councillors, and invited guests. In the beginning Luther had written with chalk upon the table these words: "This is my body." He accepted and insisted upon the literal meaning of these words, and said that his opponents should honor God and believe the pure and simple Word of the Lord. Zwingli sought to prove by a number of illustrations from the Bible that the word "*is*" could not have this literal meaning. Thus, when Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15 : 5), He does not mean that He and His disciples are actual and real wood of the vine. When he calls Peter a rock (Matthew 16 : 18), he does not mean that the apostle, instead of being a real man of flesh and bones, is a bare stone. But the more Zwingli endeavored to convince Luther of the impossibility of the bodily presence of Christ, the more firmly did Luther adhere to the literal interpretation of the words of institution. And when Zwingli quoted the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel in his favor, venturing rather boldly to remark, "This passage will break your neck, Doctor!" Luther replied,

"Do not exalt yourself too highly ; you are in Hesse and not in Switzerland. Necks are not so readily broken here ; spare your proud and defiant words until you return home to your fellow-countrymen. If not, I will administer a blow which will cause you to repent of your remark." Whereupon Zwingli responded : "In Switzerland also justice is administered in equity, and no one's neck is endangered without due process of law. I simply made use of a proverbial saying, which signifies that a person has lost his cause." The Landgrave likewise interposed at this point and entreated Luther not to understand such an expression so seriously.

Zwingli then read a passage from one of Luther's sermons upon John 6, in which he had entertained the same view as Zwingli held, that Christ speaks solely of a spiritual eating, and that the flesh profiteth nothing. To eat the flesh of the Son of God and to drink His blood mean nothing else than to believe that Christ died for us. But now, when Zwingli quoted this passage in his favor, Luther replied : "I care not how Melanchthon and I formerly explained this passage. Prove to me that, when Christ says, This *is* my body, it is *not* His body." And when Zwingli appealed to and quoted the Church Fathers, Luther again replied : "I care not what the Church Fathers teach upon this point ; for we have sufficient proof in the Word of the Lord : this is my body." The debate was continued in the afternoon and on the following day, but without leading to the end sought for, viz., union. Luther insisted upon it : "It is written, This is my body ; the rest I leave to God."

Finally Zwingli and Ökolompad requested that they might all acknowledge one another as brethren. And Philip the Landgrave also exerted himself to bring about

a harmonious agreement. Zwingli declared with tears in his eyes : "There are no other people on earth with whom I would rather agree than with the Wittenbergers." But Luther rejected the proffered hand of union, with the words, "Your spirit is different from our spirit. I am surprised that you are willing to recognize in me, who regard your teaching to be false, a brother. It cannot be that you think very highly of your own doctrine."

Then Bucer,\* who had come from Strasburg, advanced and said, "Take your choice ! Either you will acknowledge no one as brother who may deviate from you in a single point—in which case you have no brethren, not even in your own party—or else if you recognize some who differ from you, then you must also acknowledge us." And when at last the Landgrave exhorted them all not to withhold the fraternal love which they owed one another as brethren, Luther remarked, he would not deny his opponents that love which he owed to all his enemies.

But in order that this disputation should not have been held in vain, fifteen propositions, upon which both parties could agree, were drawn up and signed. These are called the "Marburg Articles." The 15th article treats of the Lord's Supper, and reads as follows :

\* Martin Bucer was born in Alsace in 1491, and died in Cambridge, England, in 1551. He was educated in a Dominican convent, but afterward espoused the cause of Luther. In 1520 he became pastor at Strasburg, and for twenty years figured as one of the leaders of the Reformation. Invited by Cranmer, he went to England in 1549, and was appointed professor at Cambridge, where he died. During Queen Mary's reign, in 1557, his body was exhumed and burned, together with that of Fagius, who had left Germany at about the same time with Bucer.

“Concerning the Supper of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, we all believe and maintain that, in accordance with its institution, both bread and wine are to be used ; that the mass is not a work with which grace can be obtained, either for the living or for the dead ; that the Sacrament of the Altar is the Sacrament of the real body and blood of Christ, and that the spiritual reception of the said body and blood is necessary to every Christian. And like the Word, so has the use of this Sacrament been ordained by Almighty God, to move the weak consciences through the Holy Spirit unto faith and love. And although we have not at this time been agreed, whether the real body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine, nevertheless Christian love is to be mutually exercised, so far as conscience will permit ; and both parties are diligently to pray to Almighty God that He will confirm us through His Spirit in the right apprehension of the truth.”

A contagious disease having broken out in the city, the Landgrave dismissed the conference. Luther departed in a depressed state of mind. He said that he had twisted himself like a worm in the dust, and that Satan tormented him so that he feared he would never see his wife and children again. In later years Luther, reviewing these conflicts, said, “I hold that I have endured more than twenty tempests and factions which the devil excited—not to mention those of bygone days. First came the papacy. I think that all the world should know with how many tempests, bulls, and books Satan has raged against me ; and when I at times had caught my breath again, they raged all the more violently, and sputter without ceasing to this day. Then when my fears were exhausted, the devil broke in again by means of Münzer’s insurrection, and came near blowing out my

light. But when Christ had stopped up this hole, Satan through Karlstadt broke several of my window-panes, and it blew and stormed as if light, wick, and candle should all be blown away. But God assisted his poor torch that it should not be put out. Then came the Sacramentarians, and forcibly opened window and door to put out the light. They endangered everything, but they did not have their own will and way."

To all outward appearances the Reformers parted in concord at Marburg, and in hope of a fraternal union in the future. But this hope in the realization of an intimate fraternal unity was never fulfilled. Various steps were taken to reach this end. Thus, a conference of Protestants was held in Schwabach (1528), where the articles which Luther drew up, and known as the "Schwabach Articles," were proposed as the basis of a possible league or union. Yet an intimate union between the different leaders and parties was never realized.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE DIET AT SPIRE.

WHILE the adherents of the Reformation were thus contending with each other, threatening clouds were again arising on the political horizon. The Emperor called an imperial diet to assemble at Spire \* (Speier) on the 21st of February, 1529, in order to adopt decisive measures to suppress heresy. The principal subject named for discussion and action was to make necessary preparation for defence against the Turks. The latter were crowding hard upon the empire and were making steady progress. Hence Luther felt himself called upon to consider the danger. In his pamphlet entitled "About a War against the Turks," he appealed to the nation, with power and energy, to take up the conflict of battle against this fearful and terrible enemy. And in the same year, when the Turks were obliged to withdraw without having accomplished their object, Luther issued another pamphlet called, "Martial Sermon against the Turk." His beloved Germans, said he, would now quietly repose in their accustomed manner, and with a good courage, in all security, would "drink and live high," abusing such great grace, and forgetting it with

\* Speier or Speyer is a town in the Bavarian Palatinate, on the left bank of the Rhine, near Mannheim, with a population of about 15,000. In 1689, during an invasion by the French, it was laid in ashes. Little remains of the imperial palace where the diet was held.

ingratitude, saying, “Aha ! the Turk has gone and fled ; what need we care, and involve ourselves in unnecessary expense !”

The Imperial Diet, inclined as the majority of its members were to favor the old Church, paid less attention to the common enemy of Christianity and of Germany than it did to the suppression of the Reformation. The decree of the previous diet of Spire, held in 1526, according to which every ruler was pledged to act in conformity with his obligations to God and the Emperor, until a general Church Council could be convened, was annulled. It was now resolved that all who had thus far abided by the Edict of Worms should continue to do so. The other princes and rulers should refrain from further innovations, should not abolish the services of the mass, nor hinder any one from attending the same, and should not harbor or protect the subjects of another ruler where such persons had escaped from his control.

By this act all further progress of the Reformation was hindered ; indeed, the way was open for the return of the Roman Catholic Church to the countries where the reforms had been introduced. The Evangelical princes and rulers could not approve of this resolution, and hence presented a solemn Protest against it, from which act they were first called Protestants. Their Protestation included the following points :

1. That it was not at all necessary to depart from the action taken at the previous diet, in accordance with which the free exercise of religion was granted to every one, until a general council of the Christian Church should convene. No measures should now be adopted contrary to that decree, which was confirmed by oath and seal.

2. The Protestants desire to remain true and faithful subjects of his Imperial Majesty in all things. But the present questions at issue do not concern their worldly affairs or civil matters, but the welfare of their souls and their eternal salvation.

“ 3. It has always been found that only a free, general council of the whole Christian Church, independent of the Pope, could definitely decide religious controversies. But no preparation is being made for such a council ; on the contrary, it is now proposed to forbid all those who deviate from the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholics, to develop in their better views—a command which they could not obey because they must then declare their present faith to be erroneous ; such a step would be a denial of Christ and His holy name. If now their opponents, the majority in the diet, should not take these statements into consideration, they, the Protestants, must herewith protest openly before God, their Eternal Creator and Preserver, who alone searcheth the hearts of men and will execute righteous judgment upon all ; and furthermore, they protest before all men and living creatures, that they will not consent to the aforesaid resolution of this Imperial Diet.”

Ferdinand, the brother of the Emperor Charles V., declined to receive this protest. In fact, the majority of the diet refused to acknowledge the right of the minority to protest. The Protestants could therefore expect nothing else than the employment of force against them. In order not to be wholly unprepared to meet such a contingency, the Elector of Saxony and the Langgrave of Hesse entered into a defensive league with the cities of Nuremberg, Strasburg, and Ulm. Luther, however, would not consent to warlike measures for the cause of the Gospel. He advised all to build upon the help of God, and not

upon the wit or the power of man. Over against the Emperor, the confessors of the Gospel must keep their hands free from blood and crime, even if his actions should prove to be pure threatenings of the Devil. He exhorted them to cling to God with prayer and in hope, for they had hitherto often experienced His deliverance. Luther still continued to repose the fullest confidence in the Emperor. “The Emperor Charles,” writes Luther, “will be present at Augsburg, and will adjust all things in a friendly manner.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

### LUTHER IN COBURG CASTLE.

THE Emperor had ordered a diet to convene in the city of Augsburg\* on the 8th of April, 1530. The object of the assembly was to deliberate upon the steps to be taken to adjust the differences and reconcile the conflicting parties within the Christian Church in matters of faith and religion. Every one's opinion and best judgment should be heard and received in love and kindness, in order that the real Christian truth might be arrived at.

Before the Elector and his company set out for Augsburg, he requested a meeting of Luther and his friends, at Torgau. † A number of articles should be drawn up, in which the evangelical doctrines should be clearly and firmly expressed, with a view of presenting them to the diet to be convened. They were also to hold themselves in readiness to accompany the Elector on his journey to Augsburg.

On the day appointed Luther submitted to the Elector seventeen articles of Christian doctrine as they had

\* Augsburg is one of the oldest German cities. It is situated in Bavaria, about thirty miles north-west of Munich, and has a present population of more than 50,000. It has always been, and is yet, a commercial and financial centre.

† Torgau is now a town of Prussia, situated on the Elbe, about twenty-five miles south-east of Wittenburg. Luther's wife, Catharine de Bora, died and is buried here. During the Thirty Years' War the town was almost completely destroyed, and in subsequent wars it suffered severely. Its present population is about 10,000.

already been formulated in the Schwabach Articles. On the 5th of April, 1530, the entire company departed from Torgau and journeyed to Coburg \* by way of Weimar, where they arrived on the 15th and awaited the summons of the Emperor. This was soon received, and on the 23d the Elector resumed his journey to Augsburg, accompanied by a numerous retinue of followers.

Luther remained in Castle Coburg, for the ecclesiastical ban and the imperial outlawry still rested upon him. He would hardly have been granted a letter of safe-conduct. But in order that he might not be too far distant from Augsburg, the Elector took him along as far as Coburg. In four days a message could be sent from Augsburg to Coburg.

Luther was well contented with his temporary abiding place. He delighted in the glorious prospect, to be had from the castle, over the productive districts of Thuringia and Franconia, and of the wooded hills which inclose them. The largest building in the castle was vacated for his use; every room was at his disposal, and he was hospitably entertained. "It is a very attractive place," he wrote to his friends, "and well adapted for study. But your absence saddens me. There is a cluster of trees in sight of my window, resembling a small forest, where the daws and the crows are holding an imperial diet. And such coming and going, and such noise and tumult by day and by night, as if they were all intoxicated! Old and young are cawing in such melody and confusion that I have often wondered how throat and lungs could stand

\* Coburg is the capital city of the Dukedom of Coburg, situated about 175 miles south-west of Berlin, not far from the Bavarian frontier. It has a population of 12,000. The old castle in which Luther resided for a time is now partly used as a prison and reformatory institution.

it so long. I have not yet seen their Emperor, but their nobility and the commoners are constantly in sight. They are not very elaborately attired, but plainly in a single color, all alike black, with gray eyes. They all sing one and the same song, and yet with a pleasing difference as between old and young, great and small. Nor do they regard the palaces and halls of the high and lofty, for their hall is arched by the beautiful and far-reaching heavens, and their floor is the meadows inlaid with fine green branches, and their walls extend as far as the end of the world.

“They care nothing for horses or armor; they have feathered wheels that aid them to escape from the range of guns. They are great and mighty lords, but what they have resolved upon I do not as yet know. This much, however, I have understood, by means of an interpreter, that they have in view an extensive foraging expedition against wheat, barley, oats, and other varieties of grain, and many of their brave knights will execute valiant deeds. And I am seated here in the presence of this imperial diet, to hear and to see, with love and pleasure, how the princes and lords and all other orders of this empire sing so happily and live so contentedly. I wish them good fortune and welfare that they might all be transfixated on a hedge-fence! I imagine these are the Sophists and Papists, with their preaching and writing, whom I must have about me in a throng, in order that I may hear their lovely voices and sermons, and behold how useful they are to consume everything upon earth, and impudently to bid for the whole world.”

As soon as Luther had received his books from home he was again diligently at work. He took hold in such good earnest upon the translation of the prophets that he thought of finishing the work by Whitsuntide. But

his former sickness again befell him, so that he could no longer work.

It was here that he received the news of the death of his father, who ended this life at Mansfeld, in the faith of the Gospel, on the 29th of May, 1530.

He was deeply moved by this affliction of death, for, as he remarked, all that he was and had, under God, he had received from his dear father. His mother died on the 30th of June, 1531, after he had sent her a comforting letter during her last illness.

Luther, though separated from family and friends, corresponded with his wife and with his friend Weller, who had been received into the family as private tutor of his little son Johnnie ("Hänschen"). It was to the latter that Luther wrote his well-known letter of June 19th :

*"Grace and Peace in Christ."*

"MY DEAR LITTLE SON : I rejoice to hear that thou art learning diligently and praying faithfully. Continue to do this, my son, and when I return home I will bring you some beautiful toys, representing an annual fair. I know of a delightful garden in which many children are found, dressed in golden clothing ; they gather beautiful apples, pears, cherries, and plums ; they also sing and leap, and are happy ; they have beautiful little horses, with golden bridles and silver saddles. Thereupon I asked the man, whose garden it is, to whom these children belonged. He answered, 'These are the children that love to pray and learn, and that are pious.' Then said I, 'My dear sir, I too have a son, named Johnnie Luther ; could not he also come into this garden and eat such beautiful apples and pears, and ride such little horses and play with these children ?' And the man said, 'If he loves to pray and to study, and is pious, he shall likewise go to Heaven, and with him Lippus and Jost [sons of Melanchthon and Jonas]. And when they all return they shall have fifes and flutes and drums, and all sorts of stringed instruments ; they shall also dance, and shoot with small cross-bows.' And he showed me a beautiful plot in the garden set apart for

dancing ; there I saw hanging real golden fifes and drums, and fine silver cross-bows. But it was quite early, so that the children had not yet eaten their meal. Hence I could not wait to see them dance, and I said to the man, ‘I will hurriedly go and write my little son Johnnie all about these things, so that he may pray diligently, study well, and be pious, and also come into this garden. But he has an aunt, Lena, whom he must take along with him.’ Then the man replied, ‘Let it be so ; go and write him all about it.’ Therefore, my dear little son Johnnie, keep on studying and praying, and tell Lippus and Jost that they also study and pray, and then you will all together come into this garden. Herewith I commend thee to Almighty God. Greet Aunt Lena with a kiss from me.

“Thy dear father,

“MARTINUS LUTHER.”

“A.D. 1530.”

Luther also maintained a lively correspondence with his friends in Augsburg. Here Melanchthon was earnestly at work upon a document which should be both a defence and a confession of faith, and which was to be presented to the Imperial Diet. Following his own inclination and disposition, Melanchthon sought to present the evangelical teachings as agreeing with the universal Christian and traditional teachings of the Church, and the reforms adopted by the Protestants simply as the correction of certain practical abuses. Luther, to whom this document of Melanchthon’s was submitted, approved of it in these words : “It pleases me right well, and there is nothing that I would change or improve. Nor would it be expedient for me to do so, for I cannot tread [*i.e.*, write or speak] so gently and so quietly. May Christ our Lord grant that it bring forth much fruit, as we all hope and pray it will.”

But at this time it was also necessary to comfort and strengthen Melanchthon, who, because of his anxiety about the proposed confession, the threats of his oppo-

nents, and his bodily sufferings, had been troubled with fears and misgivings. Luther wrote to him : “ That you should be controlled in your heart by these sorrows is caused, not by the greatness of the work, but by the greatness of our unbelief. For this cause was greater under John Huss, and under many others, than it is with us. But no matter how great the cause may be, He that leads, and from whom the cause originates, is also great ; for the cause is not ours. But why should you torment yourself without ceasing ? Is our cause false ? Then let us retract. But if our cause be true, do we not make *Him* to be a liar, who with so many promises commands us be still and patiently wait ? ” And when the Confession was finished, and Luther was requested to give his opinion upon it, he wrote : “ By day and by night I am occupied with it ; I consider it from all sides, meditate over it, discuss it by myself, search the Scriptures for proof, and daily the full assurance of our doctrines is growing stronger ; and I am daily growing firmer in my convictions, and will abate nothing, no matter what the result [of the diet] may be.” And then he writes again to Melanchthon : “ In conflicts that concern my own person I am the weaker, thou the braver ; but in those that concern the welfare of the common cause, it is just the contrary. For thou dost undervalue thy life, but hast fears about the common cause ; whereas I am possessed of a good courage, because I know that our cause is righteous and true ; yea, that it is the cause of God, that must not pale before sin and guilt as I do for my own person. Hence I am here like an observer, free from care, and regard the ravings and threatenings of Papists as nothing. If we fall, then Christ falls with us—Christ, the ruler of the world. And if He should fall, then I would rather fall with Christ than stand with the Emperor.”

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

ON the 25th of June, 1530, the Confession of' the Protestants, known as the Augsburg Confession, was read in the German language before the Emperor and members of the Imperial Diet. Dr. Jonas submitted a detailed report of the event to Luther. The latter greatly rejoiced that he had lived to see the day when, in such an assemblage, Christ was proclaimed by His followers in so excellent a Confession of Faith ; and he regretted that he could not have been present to witness this beautiful presentation of their faith. And as little as he anticipated an agreement in matters of faith—for herein they must not yield a hair's-breadth, nor undo what had been done, but rather suffer to the utmost—he nevertheless spoke of a peaceable existence of both Confessions, side by side, within the German Empire. And how deeply he felt concerned about the welfare of his fatherland, we read in his own words when he writes : “ We Germans shall not cease to trust the Pope and his Italians; until they bring us not only into a ‘ sweat-bath,’ but also into a ‘ blood-bath.’ If German princes should war against each other, that would delight the Pope, that Florentine Scapegrace, so that he would ‘ laugh in his fist,’ and say, ‘ There, ye German beasts, if ye will not have me as Pope, then take that ! ’ I cannot but care for this poor, miserable, abandoned, despised, betrayed, and purchased Germany ; for I can-

not wish it evil, but everything that is good, as indeed I am bound to do for my dear fatherland."

Since there was no hope of an agreement and union in matters of faith, Luther advised his friends to return home. " You have accomplished more," he writes, " than you could have expected ; for you have rendered unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. You have rendered obedience to the Emperor by appearing at the diet in face of trouble, difficulties, and expenditure. And unto God ye have rendered the chosen sacrifice which will penetrate to the courts of kings and princes to rule in the midst of its enemies and resound through all lands. Hence, I release you, in the name of the Lord, from further attendance upon this assembly. Return home again ; return home !"<sup>12</sup>

But Luther's friends could not immediately leave Augsburg. They were obliged to await a refutation of their Confession which the Emperor had intrusted to several strict Roman Catholic theologians. On the 3d of August their answer was presented to the diet. The Emperor then demanded that the Protestants should consider the statements of their Confession as having been refuted, and that they should submit to the proper ecclesiastical authorities. Upon this, Landgrave Philip of Hesse secretly departed, although in disobedience of the Emperor's commands. The latter, surprised and disturbed by this act, ordered another attempt to be made to come to an understanding. Melanchthon was inclined to yield in external matters, such as the order of Divine service. But Luther warned him, saying, " I hear that you have undertaken a marvellous work, to unite the Pope and Luther. But the Pope will probably decline, and Luther begs leave to be excused. See

you to it that your whole work be not thrown away. If you can succeed in accomplishing this thing against the will of both interested parties, then I will soon follow your example and unite Christ with Belial. . . . Luther is free ; and the Macedonian [Philip of Hesse] is free. Be courageous, and contend manfully."

Negotiations were soon terminated, and the danger which threatened Protestantism from too great concession was now averted. The Evangelical Princes maintained their protest of the year 1529 and the resolutions of the diet of 1516. In closing the diet the Emperor, in his parting address, gave the Protestants a respite for further consideration until the 15th of April, 1531, that they might return to the unity of the faith of the Church, the Pope, and the Empire. This respite was accepted by the Protestants, but objections were entered against the claim that their Confession had been refuted. At the same time Melanchthon wrote and published an Apology to the Augsburg Confession.

Then the Elector John also departed from Augsburg. Very justly had the surname of "the Constant" been given him. On one occasion he declared that "the cross of Christ was worth to him more than his official ermine ; the latter would remain in this world, but the former would accompany him to the stars." To the Emperor he said, " You will find me in all things to be a true and peaceful prince ; but you will never be able to alienate me from God's Word. For I know most assuredly that the doctrines contained in our Confession will prevail against the portals of hell."

In taking leave of the Emperor, the latter remarked to the Elector, " Uncle, uncle, I did not expect this of you"—a remark which he received silently and in tears. Luther was found in good spirits in Castle Coburg.

On the 5th of October the entire company left Coburg and proceeded by way of Altenburg to Torgau. Thence Luther continued and safely reached his family and home in Wittenberg after a long absence.

## CHAPTER XXI.

UNTIL THE DEATH OF JOHN THE CONSTANT.

UPON his return to Wittenberg, Luther took the place of Bugenhagen as pastor of the principal city church. The latter had been sent on a mission to introduce and establish the Reformation in Lubeck, as he had already done in Brunswick and Hamburg. Luther finished his translation of the prophets, and also acted as adviser to his ruler, Prince John, upon political and reformatory questions.

Since constant danger threatened the cause of the Reformation from both Emperor and Pope, the Protestants sought to protect themselves by a strong and well-organized league, pledging themselves to mutual defence for a period of six years. To this league belonged Elector John, Landgrave Philip, three dukes of Brunswick-Luneberg, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, Dukes Albert and Gebhard of Mansfeld, the North German cities of Magdeburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, and the South German cities of Strasburg, Constance, Lindau, Ulm, Reutlingen, etc. This union was formed at Smalcald (Schmalkalden) near Fulda, in Hesse, Christmas, 1530, and was ratified by all the contracting parties in March, 1531. It is known in history as the Smalcald League.

About this time Luther issued a "Warning to his Beloved Germans," in which he desires to inform them how they are to conduct themselves, if the Emperor, instigated by his devils, the Papists, should begin war

against the Evangelical party. In such a case no man should allow himself to be forced into obedience to the Emperor ; for whoever should do this would be disobedient to God and lose his body and soul forever. For the Emperor would then act contrary, not alone to God and divine right, but also to his imperial rights, vows, obligations, seals, and letters. And at the close he says : “ This will I say as a warning to my beloved Germans, that I will incite no one to war or rebellion, but alone to peace. But where our devils, the Papists, will not preserve peace, preferring war, I desire to have it publicly understood, that I have not done this, nor have I given cause to do it, but they have desired it. Their blood be upon their own head. I am not to blame, and have most faithfully done my part.”

Yet the Emperor could not for a moment entertain the thought of waging war against the Protestants, for he was harassed on all sides, particularly by the Turks. His brother Ferdinand, chosen king of Rome on the 5th of January, 1531, advised him most urgently to maintain peace with the Protestants in order that he might be assured of their assistance against the Turks. Thus the time appointed, April 15th, for the submission of the Protestants, quietly passed by. Nor were the enemies of the Reformation encouraged to proceed against them, except it were by their defeat of the Swiss Protestants in the battle of Kappel and the death of Zwingli, on the 11th of October, 1531.

In the spring of 1532 the Sultan made preparations for an extensive campaign against Austria. In view of this a war of German Catholics against German Protestants was out of question. And so it came to pass, after many attempts at negotiation, held in the beginning of the year at Nuremberg and Schweinfurt (in Bavaria), that the

question of union upon matters of religion was postponed until the expected Council should convene ; and thus both parties agreed to accept and content themselves with a political peace and union, which Luther had always desired. This peace was concluded at Nuremberg July 23d, 1532, and afterward ratified by the Emperor.

Luther again had to endure grievous bodily afflictions. His friends already began to speak of the probable influence which his death would have upon the Papists. But he said, “I am certain that I shall not die at this time ; for God will not surely increase the papal abomination just now, when Zwingli and Oekolompad have died, by calling me away. Satan indeed would be well pleased, for he is constantly pursuing me ; yet not his wishes but God’s desires will be fulfilled.” At the same time Luther was much troubled about the Elector. The latter lived to enjoy the beginning of the religious peace of Nuremberg, by which a peaceable development of the Reformation cause was assured for a little while, and the German people were spared the horrors of a ruinous civil war. Shortly after that, on the 15th of August, 1532, he was struck with apoplexy while on a hunt, and died on the following day. His remains were brought to Wittenberg and buried alongside those of the Elector Frederick, in the Castle Church. Luther delivered a funeral sermon in honor of him who was justly termed the “ Constant” or the “ Steadfast.” Piety and goodness were the fundamental traits of his character, whereas Frederick was distinguished by wisdom and understanding. “ If both men,” said Luther, “ had been one person, it would have been a marvel. Wisdom died with the Elector Frederick, but piety with the Elector John.”

## CHAPTER XXII.

### PREPARATIONS FOR A COUNCIL AND ATTEMPTS AT UNION.

LUTHER lived on terms of happy intimacy with the successor of John the Constant, John Frederick\* the Magnanimous. The latter was in hearty sympathy with the cause of the Reformation, and considered Luther to be his spiritual father. The wife of the Elector, Sybil, a princess of the house of Cleve, also took a sincere interest in the Reform movement and in the fortunes of Luther and his family. Luther commended them as follows : “ In them, thank God, you will find a pure married life and course of conduct, a true voice and a benevolent hand ; they help the poor, build churches and schools, preserve an earnest, faithful heart, honor the Word of God, protect the good and punish the bad, and maintain peace and good government ; their married life is so pure and praiseworthy that it is a good pattern for princes, nobles, and every one else ; the princess is a quiet Christian housewife, that resembles, as it is said, a cloister ; at home they daily read God’s Word and have it expounded, they pray to and praise God, to say nothing of what

\* John Frederick was born at Torgau in Saxony in 1503, and died in 1554. He became Elector in 1532. Meeting the Imperial forces at the head of the Smalcald League on the battle-field of Mühlberg in Saxony, 1547, he was defeated, taken prisoner, and deprived of his Electorate. He suffered a harsh confinement for five years, but bravely endured its trials, and was released and restored to his family in 1552.

the Elector himself otherwise reads and writes every day."

Since 1531 Luther had been diligently occupied with his lectures upon St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. With soul-power and earnestness he presented the fundamental doctrine it contains upon Justification by Faith. But the greatest work that he undertook, the translation of the Bible, was nearing completion. In 1534 the entire German Bible appeared in print. It was a stupendous undertaking, and in spite of the many interruptions and the length of time spent upon its preparation, it is permeated by a single spirit, and is a model of German industry and German conscientiousness. Multiplied by the printing-press, God's Word was put into the hands of millions of German Christians. It was now within reach even of the poor man. An immense number of copies were disposed of, not only in Germany but also in adjacent countries. Luther's friend Bugenhagen was so delighted with the completion of the work that he gave an entertainment at his home, and with his children and friends thanked God "for the blessed and precious treasure of the translated Bible."

Shortly before this the Emperor, Charles V., had succeeded in moving the Pope, Clement VII., to take in hand the matter of calling a council of the Church. Luther advised his friends to confine themselves prudently to necessary expressions of opinion, and to await further developments. It was soon manifest that Clement was not in earnest about the council. His successor, Paul III.,\* seemed disposed to bring it to pass.

\* Paul III. was elected Pope in 1534. He called a general council to meet at Mantua, adjourned it to Vicenza and then to Trent, where it convened in December, 1545. He was born in 1468, and died in 1549.

For this purpose he sent his legate, Paul Vergerius, to Germany to confer about the place of holding the Council. In the beginning of November, 1534, he came to Wittenberg, and entered the city in stately array. He was festively received and entertained at the castle. At his request Luther and Bugenhagen were invited to breakfast with him. An account of their interview has been preserved, and reads as follows :

“On Sunday, following All Saints’ Day, Dr. Martin Luther was summoned to an interview with the Papal ambassador, who entered Wittenberg on the previous evening with twenty-one horses and one donkey, and was hospitably received and entertained by the commandant of the castle. On Sunday morning early Luther sent for his barber. When he had arrived he asked Luther, ‘Doctor, how comes it that you desire to be shaved at so early an hour?’

“Luther replied, ‘I am called to meet the ambassador of his Holy Father, the Pope ; hence, I must prepare and adorn myself to appear before him as if I were young ; then the legate will think, “The deuce ! if Luther in his youth has done us so much mischief, what may he not do hereafter ?” ’

“After the barber had finished his work Luther put on his best clothes and hung a precious jewel about his neck. Thereupon, the barber said, ‘Doctor, that will make them angry.’

“Luther responded, ‘It is for that very reason I do it. They have more than angered us. Serpents and foxes must be treated in this manner.’

“The barber then concluded, ‘Well, Doctor, go with God’s peace, and may the Lord help you to convert them.’ To which Luther replied :

“ ‘That I will not do ; but it may well happen that I shall read them a lesson and then dismiss them.’ ”

Luther, accompanied by his friend Bugenhagen, rode to the castle, remarking laughingly on the way, “Behold, here is the German Pope, and his Cardinal Pommeranus ; these are God’s work and instruments.” They then entered the castle and announced their arrival. Forthwith they were received and exchanged salutations with the papal ambassadors, but they did not bestow such splendid titles upon him as was formerly the custom.

Among other topics discussed was that of a council, when Luther said, “ You are not in earnest about calling a council ; it is only sport on your part. But even if a council should be held, you would simply talk about hoods and tonsure, eating and drinking, and similar fool-work, which we all know beforehand, and which amounts to nothing. But about faith and righteousness, and about other useful and necessary questions, how believers may live in a harmonious faith and spirit—about such questions nothing would be said, for such things do not concern you. We have no need of a council, for we are led by the Holy Spirit unto certainty in all things ; but other poor people who are oppressed by your tyranny may need one, for you do not know what you believe. But if it pleases you, by all means call a council ; I will attend it, please God, and even if I knew that you would burn me at the stake.”

“ But in what city would you have the council convene ? ” asked the Legate.

“ Wherever it pleases you, be it in Mantua, or Padua, or Florence,” replied Luther.

“ Would you go to Bologna ? ” again asked the Legate.

"To whom does Bologna belong?" inquired Luther.  
"To the Pope," was the reply.

"Great God!" exclaimed Luther, "has the Pope also seized Bologna? Yes, I will go there."

Thereupon the Legate remarked that the Pope would not refuse to meet Luther here at Wittenberg; to which the latter responded:

"Very well, let him come; we shall be glad to see him."

"But how would you like to meet him?" continued the Legate; "with or without an army?" To which Luther replied:

"Just as it pleases him; we shall be ready to receive him in either way."

"Do you ordain any priests?" asked the Legate.

"Indeed we do," said Luther, "for the Pope will not ordain any for us."

"And there," pointing to Bugenhagen, "sits a bishop whom we have consecrated."

And many other things were said—the record of which has not been preserved. In short, Dr. Martin Luther told him all that was in his heart, and whatever else was necessary, without fear or hesitation, and with great earnestness. And when the Legate was about to depart, he called out to Luther: "See to it that you be ready to attend the council." To which Luther replied: "I will be there with this neck of mine." Then the ambassador rode away. Ten years after this, this same man, Vergerius, became a Protestant, one of the boldest confessors of the Gospel and an irreconcilable opponent to the papacy.

While the negotiations for a council were being carried on and claimed the popular attention, the cause of Protestantism was steadily progressing. And yet the

greatest hindrance to a more powerful manifestation of its influence was the division upon the question of the Lord's Supper. The conference at Marburg led to no united co-operation of the two parties. And since the diet of Augsburg, Catholics and Protestants being arrayed against each other in hostile camps, it became evident that there was urgent need of a union on the part of all the Evangelical forces. For their dissensions and the lack of agreement in their doctrines was the very reproach cast at them by their opponents, and made the most effective but unfavorable impression upon Catholics. Luther himself acknowledged this, when he said, "The gates of hell, the entire papacy, the Turks, the world, the flesh, and the devil, could not have injured the cause of the Gospel so much as these dissensions.

Hence Luther now showed a greater inclination than he did at Marburg to favor these attempts at union. Among those who were most interested in this work was Martin Bucer, of Strasburg. To this end he visited Luther at Coburg in 1530, and afterward declared that he agreed with Luther that the body of the Lord was really present in the Lord's Supper, yet so as not to be food for the stomach. Luther was satisfied with this explanation. Yet he would not have an immediate union concluded, but would rather afford more time for mutual conference and a pacifying of the contending elements. "Thus," said he, "the suspicion and resentment on our side could subside and eventually disappear; and then when the turgid waters on both sides had become clear, a genuine lasting union could be effected."

Since the return and proclamation of the old Gospel, nothing gave him more joy and delight than the expectation of realizing a sincere concord after so much sad dissension. "When this concord shall have been

firmly established, I will sing with tears of joy, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’”

In the fall of 1535 he addressed communications to a number of South German cities, inviting them to send delegates to a conference at Eisenach in the spring of 1536. These invitations were gladly accepted. But Luther, being afflicted with severe illness, could not go to Eisenach. Hence the representatives of Strasburg, Augsburg, Meiningen, Ulm, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Frankfort, etc. continued their journey to Wittenberg, where they arrived in May, 1536. The conference led to good results, and Luther declared, after he had heard all their answers and confessions, that they were now agreed, and that they would be accepted as dear brethren in the Lord. He spoke these words with great fervor and spirit. Capito\* and Bueer, the leading representatives from South Germany, began to weep, and then all thankfully united in the Lord’s Prayer. Thereupon they partook of the Lord’s Supper, and on the 29th of May, 1536, they subscribed to a number of articles drawn up by Melanchthon, and known as the “Wittenberg Concord.” The Augsburg Confession and its Apology were received by all as their common confession of faith. By this act unity of belief was established among all German Protestants, with the exception of the Swiss, who adhered to their own confessions of faith.

\* Wolfgang Fabricius Capito (Köpfel or Köpflin in German) was born in Alsace in 1478. He was for a time professor at Basel and associated with Erasmus. But, called to Strasburg, he embraced the cause of the Reformation, and labored with zeal and energy to advance its interests in that city and throughout Alsace. He died in Strasburg in 1541.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### LUTHER IN SMALCALD.

SCARCE had this union been effected when the Pope, Paul III., called a general council to meet at Mantua, by which the “Lutheran Pest” was to be stamped out. Upon this the Elector requested Luther to reconsider the evangelical articles of faith, and, in view of an appointed conference at Smalcald, clearly to determine what concessions to make to the papists and what to maintain over against them. Luther himself prepared the so-called “Smalcald Articles,” which consist of three parts : 1. About the Chief Articles of the Divine Majesty—articles concerning which there is no controversy ; 2. About Articles that refer to the office and work of Jesus Christ, or to our salvation, from which we can not deviate, no matter what may happen ; 3. About Articles which learned and sensible people may discuss. As the first and most important of all articles, he would maintain the proposition that we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ ; that must not be given up, even if heaven and earth should fall. He declared the mass to be the greatest and most fearful abomination, because it conflicted directly and forcibly against the principal article. It is the foremost of all papal idolatries. Moreover, this dragon’s tail has generated a variety of idolatrous vermin. The Pope is not the head of all Christendom by divine right or because of God’s Word, for that belongs alone to one, Jesus Christ.

In his reply to Luther, the Elector thanked God that He had given him the power to prepare such pure and Christian articles. He himself was ready to confess them before a council, or before the whole world. But how to act at such a council, this would be the subject of mutual deliberation at a meeting of the members of the league at Smalcald.

In the month of February, 1537, Luther arrived at the designated place. He rejoiced to see so large a meeting of excellent and learned men, such a body, according to the opinions of many, as could not have been assembled at Mantua. A representative of the Emperor was also present.

When Luther had been about a week in Smalcald, enjoying the wholesome surroundings and the bracing atmosphere; he was again overcome by violent pains, which threatened to end in death. On the first Sunday in Lent he had delivered a glorious sermon to a vast assemblage. After that his sickness became so serious that he cried out, "O Lord God, behold I die, an enemy of thine enemies, an accursed and excommunicated one of thine enemy and of Antichrist, the Pope, in order that thine enemy should die under thine anathema, and both of us be judged in that great day!" The Elector hastened to him, and stood at his bedside deeply moved. He sought to comfort him with these words : "Our Beloved Lord and God, for the sake of His Name and Word, will be gracious unto us, and will preserve your life, dear father." Then he turned away, for his eyes were running over. Luther thanked him for his kind visit, and also that he had endured so much for the sake of the Gospel, which precious treasure he desired him to guard hereafter as he had done heretofore.

The Elector replied : "I am afraid, dear Doctor, that

if God should take you away, He will also take away His precious Word."

"Oh no, my gracious Sire," said Luther, "there are yet many learned and faithful men with sincere intentions and good understandings; and I hope that God will grant His grace that they may become a strong wall of defence for the Gospel. May the Almighty God vouchsafe this!"

In taking leave of Luther the Elector again comforted him, saying, "If it be God's will to take you to Himself, do not be concerned about your wife and children. For your wife shall be my wife, and your children shall be my children."

For one whole week the severest pains afflicted Luther. And as he did not improve he requested that he be removed from Smalcald. The doctors offering no objection to this, he bade his friends farewell, and in departing exclaimed, "When I am dead and gone, remember this: if the Pope should lay aside his crown, if he should descend from the papal throne and renounce his primacy, and if he should confess that he has erred and has plunged the Church into destruction, then receive him into our Church; but otherwise he shall always be considered by you as the Antichrist."

In company with Bugenhagen and other friends Luther pursued his journey homeward through the woods to Gotha. On the way his condition materially improved, so that he could joyfully write to his wife: "I had been well-nigh dead, and had commended thee and the little ones unto God and my gracious Lord. But God has wrought a miracle upon me; I am as one new born; therefore do thou and the children thank God their true Father, without whom they had surely lost their earthly father."

But now, when they had safely reached Gotha, his condition grew so much worse that he bade them all farewell. To his friend Bugenhagen he dictated the following in great haste : “ I know, God be praised, that I have done right in attacking the papacy with God’s Word ; for it (the papacy) is a blasphemy of God, of Christ, and the Gospel. I am ready to die, if it be God’s will.”

But he was yet to live. He improved, and slowly continued his journey homeward to Wittenberg. Arriving there in safety, he sent word to his friends that he was gradually convalescing, and that his appetite was slowly returning, although his legs and knees would not yet sustain his body, for he had lost more of his strength than he was aware of.

At Smalcald the allied Protestants resolved that they would not accept the papal invitation to the council. To the Emperor they replied, that the council which the Pope now offered was not at all such an one as had been demanded for so long a time in the German Imperial Diets. They, on the other hand, desired a free council, not in Italy, but on German soil. The Emperor, however, being threatened by new wars, had no intention to compel the Evangelical party to take part in a Church Council. Hence, for the present, it was of none effect.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE CLOSING YEARS OF LUTHER'S LIFE.

LUTHER, having fully recovered from his sickness, resumed his former occupation. He was aware that his powers were on the wane, but in spite of this he manifested with his usual energy a great activity in preaching, in lecturing at the university, and in general literary activity. Although old, tired, and exhausted by so many labors, he was always growing young again ; thus he wrote. And when Bugenhagen was called to Denmark in 1537, Luther again supplied his place in Wittenberg. "He preaches," relates a contemporary, "regularly three times a week in the city church. And such excellent sermons does he deliver, that all concede that he has never preached so powerfully before. He points out especially the errors of the papacy, and has a large number of hearers. At the close of his sermons he prays against the Pope, his cardinals and bishops, and for our Emperor, that God will grant him the victory and withdraw him from the influence of the papacy."

Among his literary labors may be noted a thorough revision of his translation of the Bible, a new edition of which appeared in 1541. He spent two years upon this work. In 1538 he published his Smalcald Articles, and in 1539 wrote a treatise "About the Councils and the Churches." In this he developed his idea of the Christian Church as follows : It is the congregation of be-

lievers, a holy Christian people which believes in Christ, and possesses the Holy Spirit, who daily sanctifies it through the forgiveness of sins and the laying aside and expulsion of the same.

Nor did he neglect questions of civil and secular interest. Thus, in 1539 he wrote against usury, remarking, however, that his book might touch the consciences of the lesser usurers, but the great oppressors of the people would laugh in their sleeves.

The cause of the Reformation continued to progress, favored by the political situation of affairs, and notwithstanding the controversies and offences within the Evangelical Church. New dangers threatened the Protestants from the Catholic party, but these soon passed away. In Nuremberg a league was formed against the Evangelical party by Roman Catholic princes, with Dukes Ludwig of Bavaria and Henry of Brunswick at the head. The latter strenuously urged a war against the Protestants. It was also rumored that as soon as the imperial armies had defeated the Turks they would turn their attention to the Evangelical princes and their followers. Luther, whose opinion was solicited upon this question, answered that his gracious ruler, the Elector, had a safe and a secure conscience to defend himself, if necessary, against the malice of the adverse princes ; he was also bound to protect his subjects. But it would not be advisable to attack them, for that would be contrary to God's Word, which says : "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26 : 52). But he no longer opposed resistance to the Emperor, in case of necessity, as he had formerly done ; for the Emperor, said he, in such a war, would no longer be Emperor, but a hireling soldier of the Pope.

But the death of Duke George \* of Saxony (in 1539) brought to naught the projects of the Roman Catholic party. Duke Henry of Brunswick, in receiving the news of the death of Duke George, is said to have exclaimed, "I would rather that God in heaven had died." But Luther said, "Duke George presents an illustration in these latter days that is worthy of consideration ; for in a short time a father with two handsome sons has gone to destruction." The oldest of these sons was so embittered that he once sent word to Luther through the renowned painter, Lucas Kranach, saying, "When I shall take the place of my father in power, he shall have a severer enemy in me ; if my father has been like iron to Dr. Luther, I will be like steel." Luther smiled when Kranach delivered to him this message, and said, "Duke Hans had better see to it that he die in a state of salvation ; his threats cause me no fears, for I know full well that Duke Hans will not outlive his father." And so it happened ; for Duke Hans, or John, died in 1537, and his brother Frederick in 1539—both without heirs, and both preceding their father into eternity.

Thus the land and possessions of Duke George were inherited by his brother Henry, who for many years had favored and introduced the Reformation on his own domain ; and thus, after the death of Duke George, the Evangelical doctrines were accepted and the Reform measures carried out in the whole dukedom of Saxony. When some one remarked to Luther that Duke George had died at about the right time, and that thereby the tinder and lunt, which might have caused a great confla-

\* Duke George, the Bearded, as he was called in later life, was born in 1471. He was an implacable enemy of Luther and the Reformation, and persecuted his own subjects for their adherence to the new cause.

gration, had been extinguished, he thanked God and said, “ The thoughts and projects of the papists are all bent upon this, that they would be willing to destroy the Church if they could only exterminate us Lutheran fellows. But the Lord hath brought their counsels to naught and made their devices of none effect (Psalm 33 : 10). For He can deprive the mighty of their power and exalt the lowly ; he can also scatter the people that delight in war (Psalm 68 : 30).”

When Duke Henry was solemnly inducted at Leipsic, Luther was invited to be present, and preached in the Court Chapel of the Pleissenburg and in the Church of St. Nicholas. The entire service was conducted in the German language. Luther's hymns were sung before and after the sermon, and all the prayers were offered in German. There was such an immense throng of people that ladders were brought and set up against the outside of the church, that the sermon might be heard through the broken window-panes. And thus was fulfilled what Luther had prophesied a few years before : “ I see that Duke George will not cease to persecute God's Word, His preaching, and the poor Lutherans. But I will live to see himself and family become extinct, and I will yet preach the Word of God in Leipsic.”

In the Electorate of Brandenburg, likewise, was the Reformation cause introduced, in the year 1539, by Joachim II., who had become a convert to the new doctrines.

Under such circumstances, and again harassed by the Turks, the Emperor acknowledged and ratified the Nuremberg compact of a religious peace. This occurred at the diet of Regensburg in 1541, previous negotiations having taken place at Hagenau, Worms, and Regensburg. Luther did not anticipate great results from these

negotiations. The formula adopted at Regensburg seemed to him to be a vague and a patched-up affair. The papal doctrines have been deprived of their evil meaning and adorned to make them more attractive. "Nevertheless, it will come to pass as Christ says in Matthew 9, the new cloth upon the old garment makes the rent worse, and the new wine breaks the old bottles. Either make it all new or quit patching, as we have done ; for otherwise the work will be in vain."

At the Imperial Diet of Spire in the year 1544, the Emperor treated the Protestants very graciously. In accordance with a resolution then adopted, Melanchthon's plan of reformation was ordered to be submitted to a new parliament, to meet at Worms in 1545. Luther signed this document. The Pope violently reproached the Emperor for his concessions to the heretics, upon which Luther wrote his treatise, "Against the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil." In this he calls the Pope the most infernal father. In the strongest expressions he vents his wrath upon the papacy and against the Antichrist. And when the Pope summoned a council to meet at Trent, in the year 1545, Luther derided the same. Hearing that the Emperor insisted upon the appearance of the Protestants at this Council, and that he was displeased at their refusal to go, Luther said, "I know not what a curious thing this is. The Pope cries out that, as heretics, we are not entitled to seats in the Council ; and the Emperor desires that we should attend its sessions and submit to its decrees. If we consent to such a council now, why did we not submit to the lords of the councils, the Pope and his bull, twenty-five years ago ? First let the Pope acknowledge that the Council is superior to him, and let him hear the testimony of the Council against him, as his own conscience

testifies against him, then will we discuss the whole question. They are mad and foolish. God be praised !'

The Council of Trent actually began its sessions in December, 1545, but without participation of the Protestants, whose teachings were steadily conquering new territory in Germany. Thus Halle\* (the favorite residence of Cardinal Albert and the chief seat of his wanton operations) and the dukedom of Brunswick (after its prince was expelled by the Landgrave Philip and the Elector John Frederick) were won over to the cause of the Reformation. The Archbishop of Cologne and the Bishop of Münster likewise introduced reform measures upon their territory. Hence, in view of all this, the expectation was entertained that the doctrines of the Reformation would yet become the faith of the great majority of the German nation.

\* The seat of a university, founded in 1694 by the Elector Frederick, with which the University of Wittenberg was united, by order of King Frederick William III., in the year 1817.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE DEATH OF MARTIN LUTHER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the steady and continued progress of the Reformation cause there was much lacking to complete perfect unity and peace among the Evangelical party. Among many conflicts and trials, Luther had reached his sixty-third year. Frequent attacks of sickness had seriously weakened his bodily frame. Added to this was the anxiety that he felt on account of the course of ecclesiastical affairs, so that at times a weariness of life overcame him. Thus he writes a few months before his death : “ I, an aged, used-up, idle, tired, and unimpressive man, write to you. And though

had hoped that they would grant me, decrepit man that I am, a little rest, I am nevertheless overwhelmed with writing and speaking, acting and performing, as if I had never transacted, written, spoken, or done anything. But Christ is to me all in all ; He can and will do it. His name be praised in all eternity.”

In a sermon he says : “ I am tired of the world and the world is tired of me. Hence it will not be hard for us to part, about as a guest leaves his inn.” And yet, although he was so tired of work and life, he now undertook to arbitrate in a controversy between the Counts of Mansfeld, concerning certain privileges and revenues. They finally agreed to call upon Luther to act as arbitrator. He readily accepted the invitation. In company

with Jonas and Melanchthon he visited Mansfeld in October, 1545, but as the attempt at reconciliation was fruitless, he repeated his visit at Christmas time. But for the second time it was unsuccessful.

In January, 1546, he went for the third time to Eisleben by way of Halle. In the latter city he sojourned with Dr. Jonas. The river Saale having risen to a flood, he was detained three days among his friends. To his wife he wrote : " Dear Katie : We arrived at eight o'clock this morning in Halle, but could not proceed to Eisleben : for an Anabaptist met us with waves of water and great blocks of ice, which covered the land and threatened to baptize us. Nor could we retrace our steps on account of the river Mulda, but were obliged to remain at Halle between two streams. Not as if we were anxious to drink of these waters, for we substitute good beer of Torgau and good Rhine wine for the water, and refresh and comfort ourselves therewith, until the Saale shall have exhausted her anger."

To his friends he said, " Dear friends, we are mighty good fellows ; we eat and we drink with one another, but the time will come when we must die. I am going on a visit to Mansfeld to reconcile the Counts of Mansfeld, whose temper of mind I know. When Christ reconciled the world to God He received His reward in the death which He suffered. God grant that it may be the same with me."

At the Castle Giebichenstein, near Halle, they crossed the Saale and arrived in the evening at Eisleben. But before he reached that city such a great weakness overcame him that grave fears were entertained as to his life. He had gone some distance on foot, had become overheated, and had then resumed his place in the wagon. " But after that," he writes to his dear Katie, " there

struck me such a chill blast from the rear of the wagon that it seemed as if my brain would turn to ice. This may have aggravated my dizziness." At Eisleben he quickly recovered and preached again three days after his arrival. The business connected with the arbitration proceedings began forthwith, concerning which Luther writes to his wife : " Here we sit and lie both idle and busy ; idle, because we do not accomplish anything ; busy, because we are enduring untold sufferings, for thus Satan's wickedness torments us. Among so many ways out of the difficulties surrounding us, we at last found one that was promising ; but Satan hindered us again. We then tried another, thinking that we had accomplished it, when Satan once more interfered. We have now entered upon a third, which seems safe and reliable, but we shall see what the end thereof may teach. I beg of you to induce Dr. Brück to persuade the Elector to send for me on some urgent business ; perhaps I may in this way hasten the conclusion of peace. For I am under the impression that they will not permit me to depart without having accomplished the object of this meeting. I will grant them the rest of this week, but then I will threaten them with the Elector's letter. He complains of the jurists as well as of the Jews, to whom the counts conceded too much ; the latter blaspheme Jesus and Mary, call the Christians imps of Satan, drain them of their money, and indeed would kill them if they could." He wrote repeatedly to his wife in order to relieve her anxiety concerning him. Soon he could inform her of his anticipated journey home, since the negotiations would be successfully ended. He could not, however, attend the closing session, held February 17th. He was present at the evening meal, but later on he complained of an oppressive feeling in the chest. To

his friends he had often said that in Eisleben where he was born he would also die.

And so it happened. Happily had he partaken with his friends of the evening meal. He retired early, as was his custom. At one o'clock in the morning he awoke exclaiming, "O Lord God, Dr. Jonas, I am in pains and fears. I shall now die in Eisleben, where I was born and baptized." Then his friends comforted him, and administered medicines. But again he spoke: "I am passing away; I shall give up my spirit." Then he repeated in Latin, quickly and three times in succession, the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, thou faithful God."

Then he rested quietly and closed his eyes. Jonas and Cœlius asked him, "Beloved Father, will you die faithful to Christ and to the doctrine you have preached?" He answered distinctly, "Yes." Then he turned over on his right side and slept, so that an improvement was looked for. But his countenance was growing paler and his feet colder. He breathed once more deeply and easily, and then peacefully fell asleep. It was between three and four o'clock in the morning of the 18th of February, 1546.

Scarcely had he died when there arrived the Counts of Mansfeld, Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, and other lords. And from the city many hastened to the house to see their beloved dead.

On the 19th his remains were exposed to view in the church of St. Andrew's, where Dr. Jonas delivered an excellent sermon. At the command of the Elector the mortal remains of Luther were taken to Wittenberg. On the 20th a solemn funeral procession set out from Eisleben to accompany the body to its last resting-place. On the 22d Wittenberg was reached. At the Elster

Gate the remains were met by an immense throng and solemnly escorted through the length of the city to the Castle Church, where they were deposited. Luther's wife and her sons rode in the procession.

After several funeral hymns had been sung, Bugenhagen, in the presence of several thousand people, delivered an impressive sermon upon 1 Thess. 4 : 13, 14 : "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He said that they had doubtless great cause to be heartily sorry, but that in their affliction they should acknowledge God's goodness and mercy who had awakened this man ; and that he had now secured what he had often sincerely desired. He then related the incidents connected with the closing days of the great Reformer's life, and in conclusion, against his enemies, quoted Luther's prophecy and memorial inscription : "Living was I thy plague, and dying will I be thy death, oh Pope !"

Then Melanchthon delivered a funeral address, speaking of the office which Luther had held in the Church. "He is to be reckoned," said he, "among the glorious company of elect men whom God has sent to gather and to build up His Church. Dr. Luther again brought to the light of day the true and pure Christian doctrines which had been obscured in so many points, and he also diligently explained them. Especially did he teach what real Christian repentance is, and what that certain, real, and constant comfort of the heart and the conscience may be that is troubled because of God's wrath against sin. Thus, too, did he declare the genuine Pauline doctrine, that man is justified before God through faith

alone. Likewise he taught the true adoration of God, and how this is exercised in faith and a good conscience, and led us to the only Mediator, the Son of God, and not to pictures and images of stone and wood, nor yet unto dead men or departed saints.

“ And in order that the pure doctrine might be preserved and transmitted unto our posterity he has translated the writings of prophets and apostles into the German language, so clearly and distinctly, that this translation affords more light and understanding to the Christian reader than many other large books and commentaries. And as it was said of those that rebuilt Jerusalem, that with one hand they builded the wall, and with the other they wielded the sword, so did Luther also contend against the enemies of the pure doctrine, and yet wrote so many beautiful explanations, full of comforting teachings, and also with Christian deed and counsel, assisted many poor, wandering, and burdened consciences.

“ But that some have complained that Luther was too rough and severe in his writings, this I will not discuss, whether to praise or to blame ; but I will rather answer, in the language of Erasmus, ‘ God gave the world at this time, when grievous plagues and ills had gained the upper hand a sharp and severe doctor.’

“ And every one that knew him must acknowledge that he was a very gracious man, amiable in speech, friendly and pleasing, and not at all boisterous, self-willed, and quarrelsome ; and yet withal earnest and brave in his words and gestures. In short, his heart was faithful and without deceit ; his words friendly and agreeable.

“ It would take too long to narrate all his virtues ; and yet I will point out a few. I have often found him bathed in hot tears, praying for the whole Church.

And we have seen how great courage and manliness he has shown, not permitting himself to be frightened at a little noise, nor discouraged because of threats and danger, for he trusted a sure foundation, viz., God's help and support. He possessed also a clear and powerful understanding, by means of which he could soon see the best course to pursue upon all dark, grievous, and complicated questions, misunderstandings, and quarrels.

"His books and writings also show how eloquent he was, and that he may well be compared with excellent and renowned orators.

"We therefore justly sorrow and lament that so true a man and endowed with such virtues, who loved us heartily as a father, is taken out of our midst, away from life and society; for we are now like poor, miserable, abandoned orphans, to have had so excellent a man as our father, and now to be deprived of him. Hence we should keep our beloved father in everlasting remembrance, and acknowledge and consider that he was a precious, useful, and blessed instrument in the hands of God. We should also with true diligence study and preserve his teachings, as well as his virtues, which we need, and which we should take as our pattern, earnestly and according to our ability imitating the same."

Close to the pulpit from which Luther had preached, the coffin was lowered into the vault.

The loss of Luther was most deeply felt, with grief and sorrow, throughout all Germany. Upon Melanchthon his death had made the greatest impression. "The pain that rages in my soul is indescribable," said he. "As when two travellers are journeying one and the same way, and after they have gone a long while together one of them should fall down dead and the

other lament ; so do I bewail my Luther. And I had always believed that I should be the first to leave this world ; and now I am obliged to survive him ! Who knows what God may yet have in store for us ! For now I see clearly that I have not yet accomplished my work ; therefore the Lord suffers me to live. And I must work while it is called day. I count Luther happy that he did not live to experience a religious war. Perhaps I shall not be so fortunate."

Luther's widow wrote to her sister-in-law : " I readily believe that you feel a hearty sympathy for me and my poor children. For who would not be greatly bereaved and troubled at the loss of so faithful a man as my dear husband has been, who belongs not to a single city or country alone, but who has truly served the whole world. For which reason I am in truth so deeply bereaved, that I cannot reveal my great heart-sorrow to any one ; indeed I know not, and cannot express, my feelings. And had I possessed a kingdom or an empire, I would have given up all rather than to experience such loss and sorrow, as when our dear Lord and God deprived not only me but the entire world of this beloved, precious man. Whenever I think of it, I can neither read nor write, because of sorrow and tears, which God knows, and which you, dear sister, can easily realize."

" The death of great heroes is said to be the precursor of sad events ; what shall we anticipate, after so great a hero has been taken away from us ? " Thus writes a friend of Luther to Wittenberg. A year after this the Emperor Charles V. stood at the grave of Luther, having entered Wittenberg as victor of the battle of Mühlberg (April 24th, 1547), over the forces of the Protestant League of Smalcald. One of his companions endeavored

to persuade him to take vengeance upon the dead heretic. To which he replied, "My work with Luther is done ; he has now another Judge whose domain I may not invade. I war with the living, and not with the dead."

## OPINIONS UPON LUTHER.

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KRAUTH.

“THE greatness of some men only makes us feel that though they did well, others in their place might have done just as they did. Luther had that exceptional greatness which convinces the world that he alone could have done the work. He was not a mere mountain-top, catching a little earlier the beams which, by their own course, would soon have found the valleys ; but rather, by the divine ordination under which he rose like the sun itself, without which the light on mountain and valley would have been but a starlight or moonlight. He was not a secondary orb, reflecting the light of another orb, as was Melanchthon, and even Calvin ; still less the moon of a planet, as Bucer or Brentius ; but the centre of undulations which filled a system with glory. Yet, though he rose wondrously to a divine ideal, he did not cease to be a man of men. He won the trophies of power and the garlands of affection. Potentates feared him, and little children played with him. He has monuments in marble and bronze, medals in silver and gold ; but his noblest monument is the best love of the best hearts, and the brightest, purest impression of his image has been left in the souls of regenerated nations. He was the best teacher of freedom and of loyalty. He has made the righteous throne stronger, and the innocent

cottage happier. He knew how to laugh and how to weep ; therefore millions laughed with him, and millions wept for him. He was tried by deep sorrow and brilliant fortune ; he begged the poor scholar's bread, and from emperor and estates of the realm received an embassy, with a prince at its head, to ask him to untie the knot which defied the power of the soldier and the sagacity of the statesman ; it was he who added to the Litany the words : ‘ In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity, help us, good Lord ; ’ but whether lured by the subtlest flattery or assailed by the powers of hell, tempted with the mitre or threatened with the stake, he came off more than conqueror in all. He made a world rich forevermore, and, stripping himself in perpetual charities, died in poverty. He knew how to command, for he had learned how to obey. Had he been less courageous, he would have attempted nothing ; had he been less cautious, he would have ruined all ; the torrent was resistless, but the banks were deep. He tore up the mightiest evils by the root, but shielded with his own life the tenderest bud of good ; he combined the aggressiveness of a just radicalism with the moral resistance—which seemed to the fanatic the passive weakness—of a true conservatism. Faith-inspired, he was faith-inspiring. Great in act as he was great in thought, proving himself fire with fire, ‘ inferior eyes grew great by his example, and put on the dauntless spirit of resolution.’ The world knows his faults. He could not hide what he was. His transparent candor gave his enemies the material of their misrepresentation ; but they cannot blame his infirmities without bearing witness to the nobleness which made him careless of appearances, in a world of defamers. For himself he had as little of the virtue of caution as he had, toward others, of the vice

of dissimulation. Living under thousands of jealous and hating eyes, in the broadest light of day, the testimony of enemies but fixes the result, that his faults were those of a nature of the most consummate grandeur and fulness, faults more precious than the virtues of the common great. Four potentates ruled the mind of Europe in the Reformation—the Emperor, Erasmus, the Pope, and Luther. The Pope wanes, Erasmus is little, the Emperor is nothing, but Luther abides as a power for all time. His image casts itself upon the current of ages, as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its foot—the mighty fixing itself immutably upon the changing.”

## BUNSEN.

“Luther’s life is both the epos and the tragedy of his age. It is an epos because its first part presents a hero and a prophet, who conquers apparently insuperable difficulties and opens a new world to the human mind, without any power but that of divine truth and deep conviction, or any authority but that inherent in sincerity and undaunted, unselfish courage. But Luther’s life is also a tragedy ; it is the tragedy of Germany as well as of the hero, her son, who in vain tried to rescue his country from unholy oppression, and to regenerate her from within, as a nation, by means of the Gospel ; and who died in unshaken faith in Christ and in His kingdom, although he lived to see his beloved fatherland going to destruction, not through but in spite of the Reformation. Both parts of Luther’s life are of the highest interest. In the epic part of it we see the most arduous work of the time—the work for two hundred years tried in vain by councils, and by prophets, and martyrs, with and without emperors, kings, and princes

—undertaken by a poor monk alone, who carried it out under the ban both of the Pope and the empire. In the second we see him surrounded by friends and disciples, always the spiritual head of his nation, and the revered adviser of princes and preacher of the people ; living in the same poverty as before, and leaving his descendants as unprovided for as Aristides left his daughter. So lived and died the greatest hero of Christendom since the apostles ; the restorer of that form of Christianity which now sustains Europe, and (with all its defects) regenerating and purifying the whole human race ; the founder of the modern German language and literature ; the first speaker and debater of his country ; and, at the same time, the first writer in prose and verse of his age.”

#### HARE.

“ As he has said of St. Paul’s words, his own are not dead words, but living creatures, and have hands and feet. It no longer surprises us that this man who wrote and spoke thus, although no more than a poor monk, should have been mightier than the Pope, and the Emperor to boot, with all their hosts, ecclesiastical and civil—that the rivers of living water should have swept half Germany, and in the course of time the chief part of Northern Europe, out of the kingdom of darkness into the region of Evangelical light. No day in spring, when life seems bursting from every bud and gushing from every pore, is fuller of life than his pages ; and if they are not without the strong breezes of spring, these too have to bear their part in the work of purification. How far superior his expositions of Scriptures are in the deep and living apprehension of the primary truths of the Gospel to those of the best among the Fathers, even of Augustine. If we would do justice to any of the

'master minds in history, we must compare them with their predecessors. When we come upon these truths in Luther, after wandering through the dusky twilight of the preceding centuries, it seems almost like the sunburst of a new revelation or rather as if the sun, which set when St. Paul was taken away from the earth, had suddenly started up again. Verily, too, it does us good, when we have been walking about among those who have only dim guesses as to where they are, or whither they are going, and who halt and look back, and turn aside at every other step, to see a man taking his stand on the Eternal Rock, and gazing steadfastly with unsealed eyes on the very Sun of righteousness.'"

## HEINE.

" He created the German language. He was not only the greatest but the most German man of our history. In his character all the faults and all the virtues of the Germans are combined on the largest scale. Then he had qualities which are very seldom found united, which we are accustomed to regard as irreconcilable antagonisms. He was, at the same time, a dreamy mystic and a practical man of action. His thoughts had not only wings, but hands. He spoke and he acted. He was not only the tongue, but the sword of his time. When he had plagued himself all day long with his doctrinal distinctions, in the evening he took his flute and gazed at the stars, dissolved in melody and devotion. He could be as soft as a tender maiden. Sometimes he was wild as the storm that uproots the oak, and then again he was gentle as the zephyr that dallies with the violet. He was full of the most awful reverence and of self-sacrifice in honor of the Holy Spirit. He could merge himself entire, in pure spirituality. And yet he was well ac-

quainted with the glories of this world, and knew how to prize them. He was a complete man, I would say an absolute man, one in whom matter and spirit were not divided. To call him a spiritualist, therefore, would be as great an error as to call him a sensualist. How shall I express it? He had something original, incomprehensible, miraculous, such as we find in all providential men—something invincible, spirit-possessed."

## HALLAM.

"A better tone began with Luther. His language was sometimes rude and low, but persuasive, artless, powerful. He gave many useful precepts, as well as examples, for pulpit eloquence. In the history of the Reformation, Luther is incomparably the greatest name. We see him, the chief figure of a group of gownsmen, standing in contrast on the canvas with the crowned rivals of France and Austria, and their attendant warriors, but blended in the unity of that historic picture. It is admitted on all sides that he wrote his own language with force, and he is reckoned one of its best models. The hymns in use with the Lutheran Church, many of which are his own, possess a simple dignity and devoutness, never before excelled in that class of poetry, and alike distinguished from the poverty of Sternhold or Brady. It is not to be imagined that a man of his vivid parts fails to perceive an advantage, in that close grappling, sentence by sentence, with an adversary, which fills most of his controversial writings, and in scornful irony he had no superior."

## CARLYLE.

"There was born here, once more, a mighty man; whose light was to flame as the beacon over long cen-

turies and epochs of the world ; the whole world and its history was waiting for this man. It is strange, it is great. It leads us back to another birth-hour, in a still meaner environment, eighteen hundred years ago, of which it is fit that we *say* nothing, that we think only in silence ; for what words are there ! The Age of Miracles past ? The Age of Miracles is forever here !

“ I will call this Luther a true great man, great in intellect, in courage, affection, and integrity, one of our most lovable and precious men. Great not as a hewn obelisk, but as an Alpine mountain, so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all ; there for quite another purpose than being great ! Ah, yes, unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the heavens ; yet in the clefts of it fountains, green beautiful valleys with flowers ! A right spiritual Hero and Prophet ; once more a true son of Nature and Fact, for whom these centuries and many that are to come yet will be thankful to heaven.”

## BOSSUET.

“ In the time of Luther, the most violent rupture and greatest apostasy occurred which had perhaps ever been seen in Christendom. The two parties who have called themselves reformed have alike recognized him as the author of this new Reformation. It is not alone his followers, the Lutherans who have lavished upon him the highest praises. Calvin frequently admires his virtues, his magnanimity, his constancy, the incomparable industry which he displayed against the Pope. He is the trumpet, or rather he is the thunder—he is the lightning which has roused the world from its lethargy : it was not so much Luther that spoke, as God whose lightnings burst from his lips. And it is true that he

had a strength of genius, a vehemence in his discourses, a living and impetuous eloquence which entranced and ravished the people.”

## CALVIN.

“ We sincerely testify that we regard him as a noble apostle of Christ, by whose labor and ministry the purity of the Gospel has been restored in our times. If any one will carefully consider what was the state of things at the period when Luther arose, he will see that he had to contend with almost all the difficulties which were encountered by the apostles. In one respect, indeed, his condition was worse and harder than theirs. There was no kingdom, no principality against which they had to declare war. Whereas Luther could not go forth, except by the ruin and destruction of that empire which was not only the most powerful of all, but regarded all the rest as obnoxious to itself.”

## BANCROFT.

“ Luther was more dogmatical than his opponents ; though the deep philosophy with which his mind was imbued repelled the use of violence to effect conversion in religion. He was wont to protest against propagating reform by persecution and massacres ; and with wise moderation, an admirable knowledge of human nature, a familiar and almost ludicrous quaintness of expression, he would deduce from his great principle of justification by faith alone, the sublime doctrine of freedom of conscience.”

## D'AUBIGNÉ.

“ Luther proved through divine grace the living influence of Christianity, as no preceding doctor, perhaps,

had ever felt it before. The Reformation sprang living from his own heart, where God Himself had placed it : ‘ Some advised the Evangelical princes to meet Charles sword in hand. But this was mere worldly counsel, and the great Reformer Luther, whom so many are pleased to represent as a man of violent temper, succeeded in silencing these rash counsellors.’ If in the history of the world there be an individual we love more than another, it is he. Calvin we venerate more, but Luther we love more.”

## GELZER.

“ If we recall among other great names in German history the Reformers Melanchthon and Zwingli, the Saxon Electors, Frederick the Wise and John the Constant, Gustavus Adolphus and Frederick the Great, or among intellectual celebrities, Klopstock and Lessing, Haman and Herder, Goethe and Schiller, or turn to the great religious reformers of the last centuries, Spener, Franke, Zinzendorf, Bengel, and Lavater, they all exhibit many features of relationship with Luther, and in some qualities may even surpass him, but not one stands out a *Luther*. ”

## HERDER.

“ Luther has long been recognized as teacher of the German nation, nay, as co-reformer of all of Europe that is this day enlightened. He was a great man and a great patriot. Even nations that do not embrace the principles of his religion, enjoy the fruits of his Reformation. As a preacher, Luther spoke the simple, strong, unadorned language of the understanding ; he spoke from the heart, not from the head and from memory. His sermons have long been the models especially of those preachers in our Church who are of stable minds.”

## RANKE.

“Throughout we see Luther directing his weapons on both sides—against the Papacy, which sought to reconquer the world then struggling for its emancipation—and against the sects of many names which sprang up beside him, assailing Church and State together. The great Reformer, if we may use an expression of our days, was one of the greatest conservatives that ever lived.”

## MELANCHTHON.

“Luther is too great, too wonderful for me to depict in words. If there be a man on earth I love with my whole heart, that man is Luther. One is an interpreter, one a logician, another an orator, affluent and beautiful in speech, but Luther is all in all—whatever he writes, whatever he utters, pierces to the soul, fixes itself like arrows in the heart—he is a miracle among men.”

## ERASMUS.

“All the world is agreed among us in commending his moral character. He hath given us good advice on certain points; and God grant that his success may be equal to the liberty which he hath taken. Luther hath committed two unpardonable crimes: he hath touched the Pope upon the crown, and the monks upon the belly.”

## COLERIDGE.

“How would Christendom have fared without a Luther? What would Rome have done and dared but for the ocean of the Reformed that rounds her. Luther lives yet—not so beneficially in the Lutheran Church as

out of it—an antagonistic spirit to Rome, and a purifying and preserving spirit in Christendom at large.”

## FROUDE.

“ Had there been no Luther, the English, American, and German peoples would be thinking differently, would be acting differently, would be altogether different men and women from what they are at this moment.”

## LESSING.

“ In such reverence do I hold Luther that I rejoice in having been able to find some defects in him ; for I have, in fact, been in imminent danger of making him an object of idolatrous veneration.”

## STOLBERG.

“ Against Luther’s person I would not cast a stone. In him I honor, not alone one of the grandest spirits that ever lived, but a great religiousness also, which never forsook him.”

## KAHNIS.

“ Nothing but the narrowness of party can deny that there are respects in which no other reformer can bear comparison with Luther, as *the person* of the Reformation.”

## WIELAND.

“ So great was Luther, in whatever aspect we view him, so worthy of admiration, so deserving of universal gratitude, alike great as a man, a citizen, and a scholar.”



## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER.

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1483. November 10th. Martin Luther is born at Eisleben, and is  
1483. " 11th. Baptized in the Church of St. Peter and St.  
Paul.
1497. Attends the instruction of the "Null-brothers" at Magdeburg.
1498. Is sent to school at Eisenach—Ursula Cotta.
1501. Attends the University at Erfurt.
1502. Obtains his first degree : Bachelor of Philosophy.
1504. Secures his second degree : Master of Arts or Philosophy.
1505. July 16th. Enters the Augustinian Cloister at Erfurt.
1506. Ends his novitiate and becomes a monk.
1507. May 2d. Is ordained a priest.
1508. Appointed Professor of Philosophy in Wittenberg University.
1509. March 9th. Receives his degree as Bachelor of Theology.
1511. Visits Rome on business for the Augustinians.
1512. October 18th. Receives his degree as Doctor of Sacred Theology.
1516. Publishes "German Theology."
1517. Translates and publishes the Penitential Psalms.
1517. October 31st. Attaches his 95 Theses to the doors of the Castle Church.
1518. August 7th. Summoned to appear in Rome.
1518. October. Meets Cajetan in Augsburg.
1519. January. Confers with Miltitz at Altenburg.
1519. July 4th-16th. Disputes with Eck at Leipsic.
1520. August. Publishes : "To the Christian Nobles of the German Nation ;" "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church ;" "The Liberty of the Christian."
1520. November 10th. Luther burns the Papal Bull.
1521. April 17th and 18th. Appears at the Diet of Worms.
1521. May 5th. Luther on the Wartburg.
1521. May 8th. Charles V. issues his edict against Luther.

1521. May. Begins the Translation of the Scriptures.  
1522. September 21st. The New Testament published.  
1522. Luther visits Wittenberg and preaches against the iconoclasts.  
1522. March. Returns to Wittenberg and restores order.  
1524. Publishes a German hymn-book.  
1524. Proceeds against the fanatical "New Prophets."  
1524. October 9th. Lays aside his monk's cowl.  
1525. June 13th. Marries Catharine de Bora and establishes a home.  
1526. June 7th. Hans Luther is born.  
1527. January. Suffers from serious illness.  
1528. October. Inspects the churches of Wittenberg and vicinity.  
1529. Prepares and publishes his two Catechisms.  
1529. October. Attends the conference at Marburg.  
1530. April–October Luther in Coburg. (Diet at Augsburg.)  
1534. Publishes the entire Bible in German.  
1536. May. Confers with South German theologians. Wittenberg Concord.  
1537. February. Luther in Smalcald. Smalcald Articles.  
1545. October. Called to arbitrate between the Counts of Mansfeld.  
1545. Christmas. Goes again to Mansfeld.  
1546. January. Repeats his visit to Mansfeld.  
1546. January 17th. Preaches for the last time in Wittenberg.  
1546. January 28th. Arrives in Eisleben.  
1546. February 16th. Establishes peace between the Counts of Mansfeld.  
1546. February 18th. Dies in Eisleben.  
1546. February 22d. Martin Luther is buried in the Castle Church at Wittenberg.

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LUTHER



# L U T H E R :

*A SHORT BIOGRAPHY*

BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.,

HONORARY FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE,  
OXFORD

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## PREFACE.

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IN THE COMING WINTER Protestant Germany will celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. Princes, statesmen, soldiers, men of letters, the Emperor himself, men of all ranks and all professions, will unite in doing honour to the memory of the miner's son, whom they regard as their spiritual liberator. Such a movement, at a period when we hear much of the Catholic revival, is a sign of the times, and a remarkable one. When the German States revolted against the Roman hierarchy, we in England revolted also; but there is no name, among the English apostles of the Reformation, which commands the same respect as Luther's. Knox holds a position something like it in Scotland: Presbyterian Scotland is Knox's work, and the people know this

and feel it. But even the Scots do not observe Knox's birthday. Not many of them, probably, could tell either the day or the year in which he came into the world. The great English Reformers, well as they deserved of us, stand in far lower esteem. For various reasons they have never been extremely honoured, and in these days seem less in favour than ever they were.

Nevertheless, we are still a Protestant nation, and the majority of us intend to remain Protestant. If we are indifferent to our Smithfield and Oxford martyrs, we are not indifferent to the Reformation, and we can join with Germany in paying respect to the memory of a man to whom we also, in part, owe our deliverance. Without Luther there would have been either no change in England in the sixteenth century, or a change purely political. Luther's was one of those great individualities which have modelled the history of mankind, and modelled it entirely for good. He revived and maintained the spirit of piety and reverence in which, and by which alone, real progress is possible.

The English people, therefore, will not look on indifferent upon this occasion, as on a thing with which they have no concern. Germany takes the first place in the celebration, because Luther was a son of her own. But he belongs not to Germany alone, but to the human race; and this little book is published that English readers may have before them in a comprehensive form the chief features of Luther's actions and character.



## LUTHER.<sup>1</sup>

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AT LAST we have a Life of Luther which deserves the name. Lives there have been many in various languages, and Collections of Letters, and the Table Talk, and details more or less accurate in Histories of the Reformation ; but a biography which would show us Luther in all aspects—as a child, as a man, as the antagonist of Popes and Princes, and as a father and householder in his own home, as he appeared to the world, and as he appeared to his wife and children and his personal friends—for such a biography Europe has waited till the eve of the four hundredth anniversary of his birth. The greatest men, strange to say, are those of whom the world has been contented to know the least.

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<sup>1</sup> *Luthers Leben.* Von Julius Köstlin. Leipzig, 1883. An English translation of this book has just been published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

The ‘lives’ of the greatest saints of the Church are little more than legends. A few pages will contain all that can be authentically learnt of Raphael or Shakspeare.

Of Luther, at all events, this can no longer be said. Herr Köstlin in a single well-composed volume has produced a picture which leaves little to be desired. A student who has read these 600 pages attentively will have no questions left to ask. He will have heard Luther speak in his own racy provincial German. He will have seen him in the pulpit. He will have seen him in Kings’ Courts and Imperial Diets. He will have seen him at his own table, or working in his garden, or by his children’s bedside. He will have seen, moreover—and it is a further merit of this most excellent book—a series of carefully engraved portraits from the best pictures, of Luther himself, of his wife and family, and of all the most eminent men with whom his work forced him into friendship or collision.

Such a volume is singularly valuable to us, now especially, when the forces of the great spiritual deep are again broken up; when the intellect, dissatisfied with the answers which Luther furnished to the great problems of life, is claiming on one side

to revise those answers, and his great Italian enemy, whom he and the Protestant world after him called Antichrist, is pretending on the other that he was right after all, and that we must believe in him or in nothing. The Evangelicals are faint-hearted. The men of science are indifferent. The Romanists see their opportunity of revenging themselves on the memory of one who in life wrought them so much woe and shame; and had no such effort been made, Luther's history would have been overgrown, like a neglected grave, with the briars and nettles of scandal. The philosophy of history undervalues the work of individual persons. It attributes political and spiritual changes to invisible forces operating in the heart of society, regarding the human actors as no more than ciphers. It is true that some great spiritual convulsion would certainly have shaken Europe in the sixteenth century, for the Papal domination was intellectually and morally undermined; but the movement, inevitable as it was, might have lasted a hundred years, and the results might have been utterly different. If it had been left to Erasmus and the humanists, the shell of Romanism might have survived for centuries, while a cultivated Epicureanism took the place of real belief and dis-

solved the morality of mankind. If the revolt had been led by fanatics like Carlstadt, or Zwingel, or Münzer, the princes of the Empire would have combined to drown an insurrection in blood which threatened the very existence of society. That the Reformation was able to establish itself in the shape which it assumed was due to the one fact that there existed at the crisis a single person of commanding mind as the incarnation of the purest wisdom which then existed in Germany, in whose words the bravest, truest, and most honest men saw their own thoughts represented ; and because they recognised this man as the wisest among them, he was allowed to impress on the Reformation his own individuality. The traces of that one mind are to be seen to-day in the mind of the modern world. Had there been no Luther, the English, American, and German peoples would be thinking differently, would be acting differently, would be altogether different men and women from what they are at this moment.

The Lüders, Luthers—the same name as Lothair—were a family of peasants at Möhra or Möre, a village on the skirts of the Thuringian forest, in the Electorate of Saxony. ‘I am a peasant’s son,’

Luther wrote; ‘father, grandfather, greatgrandfather, were all peasants.’ The father, Hans or John, was a miner. He learnt his trade in a copper mine at Möhra, but removed in early manhood to Eisleben, where business was more active; and there, being a tough, thrifty, industrious man, he did well for himself. The Möhra people were a hard race—what the Scotch call ‘dour’—and Hans Luther was one of them. He married a peasant woman like himself, and from this marriage, now just 400 years ago, on the 10th of November, 1483, came into the world at Eisleben his first-born son Martin.

Six months later, still following his mining work, Hans moved his family to Mansfeld, a few miles distant, in a valley on the slopes of the Hartz mountains. He continued to prosper. He worked himself with his pick in the mine shafts. The wife cut and carried the wood for the cottage. Hans, steadily rising, became the proprietor of a couple of smelting furnaces; in 1491 he became one of the four Church elders—what we should call churchwardens. He drew the attention of Count Mansfeld himself, whose castle overhung the village, and was held in high esteem by him.

Melanchthon, who knew both Hans and his wife, admired and honoured both of them. Their portraits were taken afterwards by Cranach—the features of both expressing honesty, piety, and clear intelligence. Martin was the eldest of seven children; he was brought up kindly, of course, but without special tenderness. He honoured and loved his parents, as he was bound to do, but he thought in his own later life that they had been over-harsh with him. He remembered that he had been beaten more than once for trifles, worse than his fault deserved.

Of the village school to which he was early sent his recollections were only painful. He was taught to read and write, and there was what pretended to be an elementary Latin class. But the schoolmasters of his childhood, he said, were jailers and tyrants; and the schools were little hells. A sense of continued wretchedness and injustice weighed on him as long as he remained there, and made his childhood miserable. But he must have shown talents which encouraged his father to spare no cost on his son's education that his own scanty means would allow. When he was fourteen he was sent to a more expensive school at Magdeburg, and

thence, after a year, to a still better school at Eisenach, where he was taught thoroughly well, and his mind began to open. Religion, as with all superior lads, became the first thought with him. He asked himself what God was, what he was, and what God required him to do ; and here the impressions of his home experiences began to weave themselves into what he learned from books.

The old Hans was a God-fearing man, who prayed habitually at his children's bedside ; but he was one of those straightforward people who hated arguments about such things, who believed what he had been told by his priest, but considered that, essentially, religion meant the leading a good life. The Hartz mountains were the home of gnomes and demons, or at least of the popular belief in such things. Such stories Father Luther regarded as lies or tricks of the devil ; but the devil himself was a grave reality to him ; while the mother believed in witches, and was terribly afraid of them. Hans himself could see straight into a good many things. He was very ill once. The parish priest came to prepare him for death, and suggested that he should leave a legacy to the Church. Hans answered, ‘I have many children ; I will give what I

have to them ; they need it more.' He had something of his son's imagination. Looking one day over a harvest field, Martin heard him say, 'How strange to think of the millions of men and women eating and drinking all over the earth—and all to be gathered into bundles like those cornstalks.' Many such speeches young Martin must have remembered and meditated on. He had a happy life on the whole at this school at Eisenach. He is described as having been a merry quick young fellow, fond of German proverbs and popular songs and stories. He had a passion for music, and helped out the cost of his education by singing carols at night from door to door with three or four companions. A Frau von Cotta, the wife of a rich Eisenach gentleman, took notice of him on these occasions, made acquaintance with him, and invited him to her house.

His promise was still great. His father, who had no leanings for priesthood, designed him rather for the law than the Church, and when he was eighteen sent him to Erfurt, which was then the best university in Germany. It was the period of the revival of learning ; scholastic pedantry was deposed from the throne where it reigned so long, and

young men were beginning to breathe freely, in the fresh atmosphere of Ovid and Virgil and Cicero. Luther rose rapidly by the ordinary steps, became Baccalaureus and Magister, and covered himself on the way with distinction. He attended law lectures and waded into the *Corpus Juris*; but desires were growing in him which these studies failed to satisfy. In the University library he found, by accident, a Latin Bible which opened other views of what God required of him. He desired to be good, and he knew that he was not good. He was conscious of ambition, pride, vanity, and other young men's passions, of which the Bible told him to cure himself. He was not a man in whom impressions could be lightly formed, and lightly lost; what he felt he felt intensely. His life had been innocent of any grave faults, but he was conscious every moment of many little ones. ‘Alas!’ he said one day when he was washing his hands, ‘the more I wash them, the fouler they grow.’ The loss of an intimate friend brought vividly before him the meaning of death and judgment. The popular story of the young Alexius, said to have been killed at his side by lightning, is, in itself, a legend; but the essence of it is true. Returning to Erfurt, in the summer

of 1505, from a visit to his family at Mansfeld, he was overtaken by a storm. The lightning struck the ground before his feet; he fell from his horse. ‘Holy Anne,’ he cried to the mother of the Virgin, ‘help me; I will become a monk.’ Next day at Erfurt he repented of his vow, for he knew how it would grieve his father; but his life had been spared; he believed that the vow had been heard and registered in heaven; and without waiting for his resolution to be shaken, he sought, and found admittance in the Augustinian monastery in the town. His career hitherto had been so brilliant that the old Hans had formed the brightest hopes for him. He was bitterly disappointed, knowing, perhaps, more of monks and monkdom than his son. He consented with a sore heart, perhaps hoping that a year’s experience and the discipline of the novitiate would cure a momentary folly. The Augustinians owned no property; they lived on alms, and the young Martin, to break his pride, was set to the lowest drudgery in the house, and was sent about the town to beg. Luther, however, flung himself with enthusiasm into the severest penances. He fasted, he prayed, he lay on the stones, he distracted his spiritual adviser with the refinements of his con-

fessions. The common austerities failing, he took to hair shirts and whips, and the brethren supposed that they had a growing saint among them. To himself these resources availed nothing. The temper which he hoped to drive out of himself clung to him in spite of all prescribed remedies. But still he persevered; the novitiate ended, and he took the vows and became full monk and priest. His father attended the ceremony, though in no pleasant humour. ‘You learned men,’ he said at the convent dinner, ‘have you never read that a man should obey his father and mother?’ They told him his son had received a call from Heaven. ‘Pray God,’ the old man answered, ‘it be not a trick of the devil. I must eat and drink with you, but I would gladly be gone.’

Two years passed away. Luther occupied himself with eagerly studying the Bible, but his reading would not pacify his restless conscientiousness. The Vicar-General of the Order, Father Staupitz, a wise open-minded man, saw him, heard his confessions, and understood them. He perceived that his mind was preying upon itself, and that he required to be taken out of himself by active employment.

The Elector Frederick—Frederick the Wise, as distinguished from his brother and his nephew—had lately founded a university at Wittenberg, a considerable town on the Elbe. The Augustinians had an affiliated house in Wittenberg, and Staupitz transferred Luther thither, to teach theology and philosophy.

Luther was now twenty-five, and there is a gap of two years in his history. He must have observed and thought much in these years, or the tinder would scarcely have been kindled by the sparks which fell upon it at the end of them. The air of Germany was growing thick with symptoms of storm. After long sleep men were beginning to think for themselves, and electric flashes were playing about—sheet lightning still, but strange and menacing. Religion as it professed to be, and religion as it was embodied in the lives of Church dignitaries and priests and friars, were in startling contrast, and the silence with which the difference had been long observed was being broken by malicious mockeries in the ‘*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum.*’

In 1511, business of the Augustinian Order requiring that two of the brethren from the Elector-

ate should be sent to Rome, Luther was chosen, with another monk, for the commission. There were no carriages in those days, or at least none for humble monks. He walked, and was six weeks upon the journey, being fed and lodged at religious houses upon the way. He went full of hope that in Rome at least, in the heart of Christendom, and under the eye of the vicegerent of Christ, he would find the living faith, which far off had grown cold and mildewed. When he came in sight of the sacred city, consecrated as it had been by the blood of saints and martyrs, he flung himself on his knees in a burst of emotion. His emotion made him exaggerate his disappointment. He found a splendid city, a splendid Court, good outward order, and careful political administration. He found art on its highest pinnacle of glory. But it was Pagan Rome, not Christian. The talk of society was of Alexander the Sixth and the Borgian infamies. Julius, the reigning Pontiff, was just returning from the Venetian wars, where he had led a storming party in person into the breach of a besieged city. The morals of the Cardinals were a public jest. Luther himself heard an officiating priest at the altar say scornfully, ‘Bread thou art, and bread thou remainest.’ The very name

'Christian' was a synonym of a fool. He was perhaps an imperfect judge of what he observed, and he remained in the city only a month. But the impression left upon him was indelible. 'I would not,' he said afterwards, 'for a hundred thousand gulden have missed the sight of Rome. I might have thought else, that I did the Pope injustice.'

He returned to Wittenberg convinced probably that Popes and Cardinals were no indispensable parts of the Church of Christ, but still with nothing of the spirit of a rebel in him, and he flung himself into his work with enthusiasm. His sermons became famous. He preached with an energy of conviction upon sin and atonement; on human worthlessness, and the mercy and grace of the Almighty; his impassioned words drawn fresh, through his own heart, from the Epistles of St. Paul. His look, his manner, his 'demonic eyes,' brilliant black with a yellow rim round the iris like a lion's, were startling and impressive. People said 'this monk had strange ideas.' The Elector heard him once and took notice. The Elector's chaplain and secretary, Spalatin, became his intimate friend.

The incidents of his life are all related with clear brevity by Herr Köstlin. In this article I must

confine myself to the critical epochs. From 1512 to 1517 he remained busy at Wittenberg, little dreaming that he was to be the leader of a spiritual revolution. It was enough for him if he could walk uprightly along the line of his own private duty. The impulse with him, as with all great men, came from without.

Pope Julius was gone. Leo the Tenth succeeded him ; and the cultivated Pontiff desired to signalise his reign by building the grandest church in the world. Money was needed, and he opened his spiritual treasury. He had no belief himself in the specific value of his treasures ; but others had, and were willing to pay for them. ‘Christianity,’ he observed, ‘was a profitable fable.’ His subjects throughout the world were daily committing sins which involved penance before they could be pardoned. Penances in this life were rarely adequate, and had to be compensated by indefinite ages of purgatory. Purgatory was an unpleasant prospect. The Pope had at his disposal the superfluous merits of extraordinary saints, which could be applied to the payment of the average sinners’ debts, if the average sinners chose to purchase them ; and commissioners were appointed for a general sale of

Indulgences (as they were called) throughout Catholic Europe. The commissioner for Germany was Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, Cardinal and Prince of the Empire, a youth of twenty-seven, a patron of the fine arts like his Holiness—loose, luxurious, and sensual—a rather worse specimen than usual of the average great Churchmen of the age. Köstlin gives a picture of him, a thick-lipped heavy face, with dull eyes, a long drooping nose, and the corners of the mouth turned contemptuously up. The Pope had made him pay lavishly for the pallium when he was admitted to the archbishopric. He had borrowed 30,000 gulden from the Fuggers at Augsburg, the Rothschilds of the sixteenth century. Leo in return had granted him the contract for the Indulgences on favourable terms. The Cardinal was to collect the money; half of it was to be remitted to Rome; half was to go to the repayment of the loan.

It was a business transaction, conducted with the most innocent frankness. Cardinal Albert could not wholly be relied upon. An agent of the Fuggers accompanied each of the sub-commissioners, who carried round the wares, to receive their share of the profit.

A Dominican monk named Tetzel was appointed to collect in Saxony, and he was as accomplished as a modern auctioneer. He entered the towns in procession, companies of priests bearing candles and banners, choristers chanting and ringing bells. At the churches a red cross was set upon the altars, a silk banner floating from it with the Papal arms, and a great iron dish at the foot to receive the equivalents for the myriads of years of the penal fire of Tartarus. Eloquent preachers invited all offenders, the worst especially, robbers, murderers, and adulterers, to avail themselves of the opportunity: insisted on the efficacy of the remedy; and threatened with excommunication any wretch who dared to question it.

In a world where printed books were beginning to circulate, in a generation which had been reading Erasmus and the ‘*Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*,’ this proceeding was a high flight of insolence. Superstition had ceased to be a delusion, and had passed into conscious hypocrisy. The Elector Frederick remonstrated. Among the laity there was a general murmur of scorn or anger; Luther wrote privately to several bishops to entreat their interference; but none would move, and Tetzel was

coming near to Wittenberg. Luther determined to force the question before public opinion. It was common in universities, when there were points unsettled in morals or theology, for any member who pleased to set up propositions for open disputation, to propound an opinion, and offer to maintain it against all comers. The challenger did not commit himself to the adoption of the opinion in his own person. He undertook to defend it in argument, that the opposite side might be heard. Availing himself of the ordinary practice, on October 31, 1517, the most memorable day in modern European history, Luther, being then thirty-four years old, fixed ninety-five theses on the door of Wittenberg church, calling in question the Papal theory of Indulgences, and the Pope's right to sell them. In itself there was nothing unusual in such a step. No council of the Church had defined or ratified the doctrine of Indulgences. The subject was matter of general conversation, and if the sale of Indulgences could be defended, an opportunity was made for setting uneasy minds at rest. The question, however, was one which could not be set at rest. In a fortnight the theses were flying everywhere, translated into vernacular German. Tetzel con-

descended only to answer that the Pope was infallible. John Eck, a professor at Ingolstadt, to whom Luther had sent a copy in expectation of sympathy, thundered against him as a Hussite and a heretic. Louder and louder the controversy raged. The witches' caldron had boiled, and the foul lees of popular superstition and priestly abuses came rushing to the surface. Luther himself was frightened at the storm which he had raised. He wrote humbly to Pope Leo, trusting his cause in his hands. Leo was at first amused: 'Brother Martin,' he said, 'has a fair wit; it is only a quarrel of envious monks.' When the theses were in his hands, and he saw that the matter was serious, he said more impatiently: 'A drunken German has written them—when he is sober he will be of another mind.' But the agitation only grew the wilder. Almost a year passed, and Leo found that he must despatch a Legate (Cardinal Cajetanus) into Germany to quiet matters. Along with him he sent an anxious letter to the Emperor Maximilian, with another to the Elector requiring him to deliver 'the child of iniquity' into the Legate's hands, and threatening an interdict if he was disobeyed. A Diet of the Empire was summoned to meet at

Augsburg, in August, 1518. Caietanus was present, and Luther was required to attend.

The Elector Frederick was a prudent experienced prince, who had no desire to quarrel with the See of Rome; but he had seen into the infamy of the Indulgences, and did not mean to hand over one of his subjects to the summary process with which the Pope would have closed the controversy. The old Emperor Maximilian was a wise man too. He was German to the heart, and the Germans had no love for Italian supremacy. Pregnant sayings are reported by Luther of Maximilian: ‘There are three kings in Europe,’ he once observed, ‘the Emperor, the King of France, and the King of England. I am a king of kings. If I give an order to the princes of the empire, they obey if they please; if they do not please, they disobey. The King of France is a king of asses. He orders what he pleases, and they obey like asses. The King of England is king of a loyal nation. They obey him with heart and mind as faithful subjects.’

A secretary had embezzled 3,000 gulden. Maximilian sent for him, and asked what should be done to a confidential servant who had robbed his master. The secretary recommended the gallows. ‘Nay,

nay,' the Emperor said, and tapped him on the shoulder, 'I cannot spare you yet.'

Luther was told that he must appear. He looked for nothing but death, and he thought of the shame which he would bring upon his parents. He had to walk from Wittenberg, and he had no money. At Nuremberg he borrowed a coat of a friend that he might present himself in such high company with decency. He arrived at Augsburg on the 7th of October. The Legate would have seized him at once; but Maximilian had sent a safe-conduct for him, and Germany was not prepared to allow a second treachery like that which had sent Huss to the stake. The princes of the Diet were out of humour too, for Cajetanus had been demanding money from them, and they had replied with a list of grievances—complaints of Annates, first fruits, and Provisions, familiar to the students of English Reformation history. The Legate saw that he must temporise with the troublesome monk. Luther was told that if he would retract he would be recommended to the Pope, and might look for high promotion. Cajetanus himself then sent for him. Had the Cardinal been moderate, Luther said afterwards that he was prepared to yield in much. He was still

young and diffident, and modest : and it was a great thing for a peasant's son to stand alone against the ruling powers. But the Legate was scornful. He could not realise that this insignificant object before him was a spark of living fire, which might set the world blazing. He told Luther briefly that he must retract his theses. Luther said he could not without some answer to them. Caietan would not hear of argument. ‘Think you,’ he said, ‘that the Pope cares for the opinions of Germany ? Think you that the princes will take up arms for you ? No indeed. And where will you be then ?’ ‘Under Heaven,’ Luther answered. He wrote to the Legate afterwards that perhaps he had been too violent. If the sale of Indulgences was stopped he promised to be silent. Caietan replied only with a scheme for laying hold on him in spite of his safe-conduct. Being warned of his danger, he escaped at night through a postern, and rode off with a guide, ‘in a monk’s gown and unbreeched,’ home to Wittenberg.

The Legate wrote fiercely to the Elector. Luther offered to leave Saxony and seek an asylum in Paris. But Frederick replied that the monk had done right in refusing to retract till the theses had

been argued. He was uneasy ; he was no theologian ; but he had a sound instinct that the Indulgences were no better than scandalous robbery. Luther for the present should remain where he was.

Luther did remain, and was not idle. He published an account of his interview with the Legate. He wrote a tract on the Papal supremacy and appealed to a general council. The Pope found that he must still negotiate. He had for a chamberlain a Saxon noble, Karl von Miltitz, a born subject of the Elector. He sent Miltitz to Frederick with ‘the Golden Rose,’ the highest compliment which the Court of Rome could pay, with the politest of letters. He had heard with surprise, he said, that a child of perdition was preaching heresy in his dominions. He had the utmost confidence that his beloved son and the magistrates of the electorate would put this offspring of Satan to silence. Miltitz arrived in the middle of the winter 1518-19. He discovered, to his astonishment, that three-fourths of Germany was on Luther’s side. So fast the flame had spread, that an army of 25,000 men would not be able to carry him off by force. He sought an interview with Luther, at which Spalatin, the Elector’s chaplain, was present. He sobbed

and implored ; kisses, tears—crocodile's tears—were tried in profusion. Luther was ready to submit his case to a synod of German bishops, and wrote again respectfully to the Pope declining to retract, but hoping that the Holy See would no longer persist in a course which was creating scandal through Germany.

Perhaps if Maximilian had lived, the Pope would have seen his way to some concession, for Maximilian, it was certain, would never sanction violent courses ; but, in January, 1519, Maximilian died, and Charles the Fifth succeeded him. Charles was then but twenty years old ; the Elector Frederick's influence had turned the scale in favour of Maximilian's grandson. There were hopes then that a young prince, coming fresh to the throne in the bitter throes of a new era, might set himself at the head of a national German reformation, and regrets since have been wasted on the disappointment. Regrets for ‘what might have been’ are proverbially idle. Great movements which are unresisted flow violently on, and waste themselves in extravagance and destruction ; and revolutions which are to mark a step in the advance of mankind need always the discipline of opposition, till the baser

parts are beaten out of them. Like the two horses which in Plato's fable draw the chariot of the soul through the vaults of heaven, two principles work side by side in evolving the progress of humanity—the principle of liberty and the principle of authority. Liberty unchecked rushes into anarchy and licence ; authority, if it has no antagonism to fear, stagnates into torpor, or degenerates into tyranny. Luther represented the new life which was beginning ; Charles the Fifth represented the institutions of 1500 years, which, if corrupt in some parts of Europe, in others had not lost their old vitality, and were bearing fruit still in brave and noble forms of human nature. Charles was Emperor of the Germany of Luther, but he was also the King of the Spain of Saint Ignatius. The Spaniards were as earnestly and piously Catholic, as the Germans were about to become Evangelical. Charles was in his religion Spanish. Simple, brave, devout, unaffected, and wise beyond his years, he believed in the faith which he had inherited. Some minds are so constructed as to fly eagerly after new ideas, and the latest born appears the truest ; other minds look on speculative novelties as the ephemeral productions of vanity or restlessness, and hold to

the creeds which have been tested by experience, and to the profession in which their fathers have lived and died. Both of these modes of thought are good and honourable in themselves, both are essential to the development of truth ; yet they rarely coexist in any single person. By nature and instinct Charles the Fifth belonged to the side of authority ; and interest, and indeed necessity, combined to hold him to it. In Germany he was king of kings, but of kings over whom, unless he was supported by the Diet, his authority was a shadow. In Spain he was absolute sovereign ; and if he had gone with the Reformers against the Pope, he would have lost the hearts of his hereditary subjects. Luther was not to find a friend in Charles ; but he was to find a noble enemy, whose lofty qualities he always honoured and admired.

After the failure of Miltitz, the princes of the empire had to decide upon their course. In the summer of 1519 there was an intellectual tournament at Leipzig before Duke George of Saxony. Luther was the champion on one aide, John Eck, of Ingolstadt, on the other. We have a description of Luther by a friend who saw him on this occasion : he was of middle height, so lean from study

and anxiety that his bones could be counted. He had vast knowledge, command of Scripture, fair acquaintance with Greek and Hebrew; his manner was good; his speech pregnant with matter; in society he was lively, pleasant, and amusing. On his feet he stood remarkably firm, body bent rather back than forward, the face thrown up, and the eyes flashing like a lion's.

Eck was less favourably drawn: with a face like a butcher's, and a voice like a town crier's; a hesitation in speech which provoked a play upon his name, as being like the *eck, eck, eck* of a jackdaw. Eck called Luther a disciple of John Huss; and Luther defended Huss. Luther had appealed to a general council. Eck reminded him that the Council of Constance had condemned Huss, and so forced him to say that councils might make mistakes. Papal supremacy was next fought over. Did Christ found it? Could it be proved from the New Testament? Duke George thought Eck had the best of the encounter. Leipzig Catholic gossip had a story that Luther's mother had confessed that Martin's father had been the devil. But Luther remained the favourite of Germany. His tracts circulated in hundreds of thousands. Ulrich von

Hutten and Franz von Sickingen offered him an asylum if he had to leave the electorate. He published an address to the German nation denouncing the Papacy as a usurpation, which rang like the blast of a trumpet. He sent a copy to the Elector, who replied with a basket of game.

Eck, meanwhile, who thought the victory had been his, was despatched by Duke George to Rome, to urge the Pope to action. Charles had signified his own intended attitude by ordering Luther's writings to be burnt in the Low Countries. Pope Leo thus encouraged, on the 16th of June, 1520, issued his famous Bull, against 'the wild boar who had broken into the Lord's vineyard.' Forty-one of Luther's propositions were selected and specially condemned ; and Eck was sent back with it to Germany, with orders, if the wild boar was still impenitent, to call in the secular arm. Erasmus, who had been watching the storm from a distance, ill contented, but not without clear knowledge where the right lay, sent word that no good was to be looked for from the young Emperor. Luther, who had made up his mind to death as the immediate outlook for him, was perfectly fearless. The Pope could but kill his body, and he cared only for his

soul and for the truth. The Pope had now condemned formally what Luther conceived to be written in the plainest words in Scripture. The Papal chair, therefore, was ‘Satan’s seat,’ and the occupant of it was plainly Antichrist. At the Elector’s request he wrote to Leo once more, but he told him, in not conciliatory language, that the See of Rome was worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. When Eck arrived in December, on his commission, Luther ventured the last step, from which there could be no retreat. The Pope had condemned Luther’s writings to the fire. On the 10th of December, Luther solemnly burnt at Wittenberg a copy of the Papal Decretals. ‘Because,’ he said, ‘thou hast troubled the Lord’s saints, let eternal fire consume thee.’ The students of the university sang the Te Deum round the pile, and completed the sacrifice by flinging into the flames the Bull which had been brought by Eck. Luther trembled, he said, before the daring deed was accomplished, but when it was done he was better pleased than with any act of his life. A storm had now burst, he said, which would not end till the day of judgment.

The prophecy was true in a sense deeper than

Luther intended. The intellectual conflict which is still raging is the yet uncompleted outcome of that defiance of established authority. Far and wide the news flew. Pamphlets, poems, satires, showered from the printing-presses. As in the dawn of Christianity, house was set against house, and fathers against their sons and daughters. At Rome the frightened courtiers told each other that the monk of Wittenberg was coming with 70,000 barbarians to sack the Holy City, like another Attila.

The Pope replied by excommunicating Luther and all his adherents, and laying the country which harboured him under the threatened interdict. The Elector gave no sign; all eyes were looking to the young Emperor. An Imperial Diet was called, to meet at Worms in 1521, at which Charles was to be present in person, and there Luther was to come and answer for himself. The Elector remembered the fate of John Huss at Constance. Charles might undertake for Luther's safety; but a safe-conduct had not saved Huss, and Popes could dispense with promises. Luther himself had little hope, but also no fear. 'I will go,' he said, 'if I am to be carried sick in my bed. I am called of the Lord when the

Kaiser calls me. I trust only that the Emperor of Germany will not begin his reign with shedding innocent blood. I would rather be murdered by the Romans.'

The Diet met on the 21st of January. The princes assembled. The young Emperor came for the first time face to face with them, with a fixed purpose to support the insulted majesty of the spiritual sovereign of Christendom. His first demand was that Luther should be arrested at Wittenberg, and that his patrons should be declared traitors. Seven days followed of sharp debate. The Elector Frederick dared to say that 'he found nothing in the Creed about the Roman Church, but only the Catholic Christian Church.' 'This monk makes work,' said another; 'some of us would crucify him, and I think he will hardly escape; but what if he rises again the third day?' The princes of the empire naturally enough did not like rebels against lawful authority; but the Elector was resolute, and it was decided that Luther should not be condemned without a hearing. The Pope as such had few friends among them—even Duke George himself insisted that many things needed mending.

Kaspar Sturm, the Imperial herald, was sent to

Wittenberg to command Luther's attendance, under pain of being declared a heretic. The Emperor granted a safe-conduct, and twenty-one days were allowed. On the 2nd of April, the Tuesday after Easter, Luther set out on his momentous journey. He travelled in a cart with three of his friends, the herald riding in front in his coat of arms. If he had been anxious about his fate he would have avoided displays upon the road, which would be construed into defiance. But Luther let things take their chance, as if it had been a mere ordinary occasion. The Emperor had not waited for his appearance to order his books to be burnt. When he reached Erfurt on the way, the sentence had just been proclaimed. The herald asked him if he still meant to go on. 'I will go,' he said, 'if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the house-tops. Though they burnt Huss, they could not burn the truth.' The Erfurt students, in retaliation, had thrown the Bull into the water. The Rector and the heads of the university gave Luther a formal reception as an old and honoured member; he preached at his old convent, and he preached again at Gotha and at Eisenach. Caietan had protested against the appearance in the Diet of an ex-

communicated heretic. The Pope himself had desired that the safe-conduct should not be respected, and the bishops had said that it was unnecessary. Manœuvres were used to delay him on the road till the time allowed had expired. But there was a fierce sense of fairness in the lay members of the Diet, which it was dangerous to outrage. Franz von Sickingen hinted that if there was foul play it might go hard with Cardinal Cajetan—and Von Sickingen was a man of his word in such matters. On the 16th of April, at ten in the morning, the cart entered Worms, bringing Luther in his monk's dress, followed and attended by a crowd of cavaliers. The town's people were all out to see the person with whose name Germany was ringing. As the cart passed through the gates the warder on the walls blew a blast upon his trumpet. The Elector had provided a residence. As he alighted, one who bore him no good will noted the 'demonic eyes' with which he glanced about him. That evening a few nobles called to see him who had been loud in their complaints of Churchmen's exactions at the Diet. Of the princes, one only came, an ardent noble-minded youth, of small influence as yet, but of high-spirited purpose, Philip, Landgrave

of Hesse. Instinct, more than knowledge, drew him to Luther's side. 'Dear Doctor,' he said, 'if you are right, the Lord God stand by you.'

Luther needed God to stand by him, for in all that great gathering he could count on few assured friends. The princes of the empire were resolved that he should have fair play, but they were little inclined to favour further a disturber of the public peace. The Diet sate in the Bishop's palace, and the next evening Luther appeared. The presence in which he found himself would have tried the nerves of the bravest of men : the Emperor, sternly hostile, with his retinue of Spanish priests and nobles ; the archbishops and bishops, all of opinion that the stake was the only fitting place for so insolent a heretic ; the dukes and barons, whose stern eyes were little likely to reveal their sympathy, if sympathy any of them felt. One of them only, George of Frundsberg, had touched Luther on the shoulder as he passed through the ante-room. 'Little monk, little monk,' he said, 'thou hast work before thee, that I, and many a man whose trade is war, never faced the like of. If thy heart is right, and thy cause good, go on in God's name. He will not forsake thee.'

A pile of books stood on a table when he was brought forward. An officer of the court read the titles, asked if he acknowledged them, and whether he was ready to retract them.

Luther was nervous, not without cause. He answered in a low voice that the books were his. To the other question he could not reply at once. He demanded time. His first appearance had not left a favourable impression ; he was allowed a night to consider.

The next morning, April 18, he had recovered himself ; he came in fresh, courageous, and collected. His old enemy, Eck, was this time the spokesman against him, and asked what he was prepared to do.

He said firmly that his writings were of three kinds : some on simple gospel truth, which all admitted, and which of course he could not retract ; some against Papal laws and customs, which had tried the consciences of Christians and had been used as excuses to oppress and spoil the German people. If he retracted these he would cover himself with shame. In a third sort he had attacked particular persons, and perhaps had been too violent. Even here he declined to retract.

simply, but would admit his fault if fault could be proved.

He gave his answers in a clear strong voice, in Latin first, and then in German. There was a pause, and then Eck said that he had spoken disrespectfully; his heresies had been already condemned at the Council at Constance; let him retract on these special points, and he should have consideration for the rest. He required a plain Yes or No from him, ‘without horns.’ The taunt roused Luther’s blood. His full brave self was in his reply. ‘I will give you an answer,’ he said, ‘which has neither horns nor teeth. Popes have erred and councils have erred. Prove to me out of Scripture that I am wrong, and I submit. Till then my conscience binds me. Here I stand. I can do no more. God help me. Amen.’

All day long the storm raged. Night had fallen, and torches were lighted in the hall before the sitting closed. Luther was dismissed at last; it was supposed, and perhaps intended, that he was to be taken to a dungeon. But the hearts of the lay members of the Diet had been touched by the courage which he had shown. They would not permit a hand to be laid on him. Duke Eric of Bruns-

wick handed to him a tankard of beer which he had himself half drained. When he had reached his lodging again, he flung up his hands. ‘I am through!’ he cried, ‘I am through! If I had a thousand heads, they should be struck off one by one before I would retract.’ The same evening the Elector Frederick sent for him, and told him he had done well and bravely.

But though he had escaped so far, he was not acquitted. Charles conceived that he could be now dealt with as an obstinate heretic. At the next session (the day following), he informed the Diet that he would send Luther home to Wittenberg, there to be punished as the Church required. The utmost that his friends could obtain was that further efforts should be made. The Archbishop of Treves was allowed to tell him that if he would acknowledge the infallibility of councils, he might be permitted to doubt the infallibility of the Pope. But Luther stood simply upon Scripture. There, and there only, was infallibility. The Elector ordered him home at once, till the Diet should decide upon his fate; and he was directed to be silent on the way, with significant reference to his Erfurt sermon. A majority in the Diet, it was now clear,

would pronounce for his death. If he was sentenced by the Great Council of the Empire, the Elector would be no longer able openly to protect him. It was decided that he should disappear, and disappear so completely that no trace of him should be discernible. On his way back through the Thuringian Forest, three or four miles from Altenstein, a party of armed men started out of the wood, set upon his carriage, seized and carried him off to Wartburg Castle. There he remained, passing by the name of the Ritter George, and supposed to be some captive knight. The secret was so well kept, that even the Elector's brother was ignorant of his hiding-place. Luther was as completely lost as if the earth had swallowed him. Some said that he was with Von Sickingen; others that he had been murdered. Authentic tidings of him there were none. On the 8th of May the Edict of Worms was issued, placing him under the ban of the empire; but he had become 'as the air invulnerable,' and the face of the world had changed before he came back to it.

The appearance of Luther before the Diet on this occasion is one of the finest, perhaps it is the very finest, scene in human history. Many a man

has encountered death bravely for a cause which he knows to be just, when he is sustained by the sympathy of thousands, of whom he is at the moment the champion and the representative. But it is one thing to suffer and another to encounter face to face and single-handed the array of spiritual and temporal authorities which are ruling supreme. Luther's very cause was yet unshaped and undetermined, and the minds of those who had admired and followed him were hanging in suspense for the issue of his trial. High-placed men of noble birth are sustained by pride of blood and ancestry, and the sense that they are the equals of those whom they defy. At Worms there was on one side a solitary low-born peasant monk, and on the other the Legate of the dreaded power which had broken the spirit of Kings and Emperors—sustained and personally supported by the Imperial Majesty itself and the assembled princes of Germany before whom the poor peasantry had been taught to tremble as beings of another nature from themselves. Well might George of Frundsberg say that no knight among them all had ever faced a peril which could equal this.

The victory was won. The wavering hearts took

courage. The Evangelical revolt spread like an epidemic. The Papacy was like an idol, powerful only as long as it was feared. Luther had thrown his spear at it, and the enchantment was broken. The idol was but painted wood, which men and boys might now mock and jibe at. Never again had Charles another chance of crushing the Reformation. France fell out with him on one side, and for the rest of his life gave him but brief intervals of breathing time. The Turks hung over Austria like a thunder cloud, terrified Ferdinand in Vienna, and swarmed over the Mediterranean in their pirate galleys. Charles was an earnest Catholic ; but he was a statesman also, too wise to add to his difficulties by making war on heresy. What some call Providence and others accident had so ordered Europe that the tree which Luther had planted was allowed to grow till it was too strongly rooted to be overthrown.

Luther's abduction and residence at Wartburg is the most picturesque incident in his life. He dropped his monk's gown, and was dressed like a gentleman ; he let his beard grow and wore a sword. In the castle he was treated as a distinguished guest. Within the walls he was free to go where

he liked. He rode in the forest with an attendant, and as the summer came on, walked about and gathered strawberries. In August there was a two days' hunt, at which, as Ritter George, he attended, and made his reflections on it. ‘We caught a few hares and partridges,’ he said, ‘a worthy occupation for idle people.’ In the ‘nets and dogs’ he saw the devil entangling or pursuing human souls. A hunted hare ran to his feet; he sheltered it for a moment, but the hounds tore it in pieces. ‘So,’ he said, ‘rages the Pope and Satan to destroy those whom I would save.’ The devil, he believed, haunted his own rooms. That he threw his ink-bottle at the devil is unauthentic; but there were noises in his boxes and closets which, he never doubted, came from his great enemy. When he heard the sounds, he made jokes at them, and they ceased. ‘The devil,’ he said, ‘will bear anything better than to be laughed at.’

The revolution, deprived of its leader, ran wild meanwhile. An account of the scene at Worms, with Luther’s speeches, and woodcut illustrations, was printed on broadsheets and circulated in hundreds of thousands of copies. The people were like schoolboys left without a master. Convents and

monasteries dissolved by themselves; monks and nuns began to marry; there was nothing else for the nuns to do, turned, as they were, adrift without provision. The Mass in most of the churches in Saxony was changed into a Communion. But without Luther it was all chaos, and no order could be taken. So great was the need of him, that in December he went to Wittenberg in disguise; but it was not yet safe for him to remain there. He had to retreat to his castle again, and in that compelled retreat he bestowed on Germany the greatest of all the gifts which he was able to offer. He began to translate the Bible into clear vernacular German. The Bible to him was the sole infallible authority, where every Christian for himself could find the truth and the road to salvation, if he faithfully and piously looked for it. He had probably commenced the work at the beginning of his stay at the castle. In the spring of 1522 the New Testament was completed. In the middle of March the Emperor's hands now being fully occupied, the Elector sent him word that he need not conceal himself any longer; and he returned finally to his home and his friends.

The New Testament was printed in November of

that year, and became at once a household book in Germany. The contrast visible to the simplest eyes between the tawdry splendid Papacy and Christ and the Apostles, settled for ever the determination of the German people to have done with the old idolatry. The Old Testament was taken in hand at once, and in two years half of it was roughly finished. Luther himself, confident now that a special Providence was with him, showered out controversial pamphlets, not caring any longer to measure his words. Adrian VI., Clement VII., claimoured for the execution of the Edict of Worms. The Emperor, from a distance, denounced the new Mahomet. But they spoke to deaf ears. The Diet answered only with lists of grievances, and a demand for a free Council, to be held in Germany itself.

The Reformation had risen out of the people; and it is the nature of popular movements, when the bonds of authority are once broken, to burst into anarchy. Luther no longer believed in an apostolically ordained priesthood; but he retained a pious awe for the sacraments, which he regarded really and truly as mysterious sources of grace. Zwingle in Switzerland, Carlstadt and others in

Saxony, looked on the sacraments as remnants of idolatrous superstition. Carlstadt himself, ‘Arch-deacon of Orlamund,’ as he was called, had sprung before his age into notions of universal equality and brotherhood. Luther found him one day metamorphosed into ‘Neighbour Andrew,’ on a dung-heap loading a cart. A more dangerous fanatic was Münzer, the parson of Allstadt, near Weimar. It was not the Church only which needed reform. The nobles had taken to luxury and amusement. Toil and tax lay heavy on their peasant tenants; as the life in the castle had grown splendid, the life in the cabin had become hard and bitter. Luther had confined himself to spiritual matters, but the spiritual and the secular were too closely bound together to be separated. The Allstadt parson, after much ‘conversing with God,’ discovered that he had a mission to establish the Kingdom of the Saints, where tyrants were to be killed, and all men were to live as brothers, and all property was to be in common. Property, like all else which man may possess, is a trust which he holds, not for his own indulgence, but for the general good. This is a universal principle. Nature is satisfied with a very imperfect recognition of it; but if there is no recog-

nition, if the upper classes, as they are called, live only for pleasure, and only for themselves, the conditions are broken under which human beings can live together, and society rushes into chaos. The rising spread, 1524-25. The demands actually set forward fell short of the Anabaptist ideal, and were not in themselves unreasonable. The people required to be allowed to choose their own pastors, an equitable adjustment of tithes, emancipation from serfdom, and lastly, liberty to kill game—a right for a poor man to feed his starving children with a stray hare or rabbit. Luther saw nothing in this petition which might not be wisely conceded. But Münzer himself made concession impossible. He raised an ‘Army of the Lord.’ He marched through the country, burning castles and convents, towns and villages, and executing savage vengeance on the persons of the ‘Lord’s enemies.’ It was the heaviest blow which Luther had received. His enemies could say, and say with a certain truth, ‘Here was the visible fruit of his own action.’ He knew that he was partly responsible, and that without him these scenes would not have been. The Elector, unfortunately, was ill—mortally so. He died while the insurrection was still blazing. His

brother John succeeded, very like him in purpose and character, and proceeded instantly to deal with the emergency. Luther hurried up and down the country, preaching to the people, rebuking the tyrannous Counts and Barons, and urging the Protestant Princes to exert themselves to keep the peace. Philip of Hesse, the Duke of Brunswick, and Count Mansfelt collected a force. The peasants were defeated and scattered. Münzer was taken and hanged, and the fire was extinguished. It was well for Luther that the troops which had been employed were exclusively Protestant. The Catholics said scornfully of him, ‘He kindled the flame, and he washes his hands like Pilate.’ Had the army raised to quell the peasants belonged to Ferdinand, the Edict of Worms would have been made a reality.

The Landgrave and the new Elector, John, allowed no severe retaliation when armed resistance was over. They set themselves to cure, as far as possible, the causes of discontent. They trusted, as Luther did, to the return of a better order of things from ‘a revival of religion.’

The Peasant War had been the first scandal to the Reformation. The second, which created

scarcely less disturbance, was Luther's own immediate work. As a priest he had taken a vow of celibacy. As a monk he had again bound himself by a vow of chastity.

In priesthood and monkery he had ceased to believe. If the orders themselves were unreal, the vows to respect the rules of those orders might fairly be held to be nugatory. Luther not only held that the clergy, as a rule, might be married, but he thought it far better that they should be married; and the poor men and women who were turned adrift on the breaking up of the religious houses he had freely advised to marry without fear or scruple. But still around a vow a certain imagined sanctity persisted in adhering; and when he was recommended to set an example to others who were hesitating, he considered, and his friend, Melanchthon, considered, that, in his position, and with so many indignant eyes turned upon him, he ought not to give occasion to the enemy. Once, indeed, impatiently, he said that marry he would, to spite the devil. But he had scarcely a home to offer to any woman, and no leisure and no certainty of companionship. He was for some years after the Edict of Worms in constant expectation of being

executed as a heretic. He still lived in the Augustinian convent at Wittenberg; but the monks had gone, and there were no revenues. He had no income of his own; one suit of clothes served him for two years; the Elector at the end of them gave him a piece of cloth for another. The publishers made fortunes out of his writings, but he never received a florin for them. So ill-attended he was that for a whole year his bed was never made, and was mildewed with perspiration. ‘I was tired out with each day’s work,’ he said, ‘and lay down and knew no more.’

But things were getting into order again in the Electorate. The parishes were provided with pastors, and the pastors with modest wages. Luther was professor at the university, and the Elector allowed him a salary of 200 gulden a year.<sup>1</sup> Presents came from other quarters, and he began to think that it was not well for him to be alone. In Wittenberg there was a certain Catherine von Bora, sixteen years younger than he, who had been a nun in a distant convent. Her family were noble, but poor; they had provided for their daughter by placing her in the cloister when she was a child of

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<sup>1</sup> Equal to about 30*l.* of modern money.

nine; at sixteen she had taken the vows; but she detested the life into which she had been forced, and when the movement began she had applied to her friends to take her out of it. The friends would do nothing; but in April, 1523, she and nine others were released by the people. As they were starving, Luther collected money to provide for them, and Catherine von Bora, being then twenty-four years old, came to Wittenberg to reside with the burgomaster, Philip Reichenbach. Luther did not at first like her; she was not beautiful, and he thought that she was proud of her birth and blood; but she was a simple, sensible, shrewd, active woman; she, in the sense in which Luther was, might consider herself dedicated to God, and a fit wife for a religious reformer. Luther's own father was most anxious that he should marry, and in a short time they came to understand each other. So, on the 13th of June, 1525, a month after Münzer had been stamped out at Frankenhausen, a little party was collected in the Wittenberg Cloister—Bugenhagen, the town pastor, Professor Jonas, Lucas Cranach (the painter), with his wife, and Professor Apel, of Bamberg, who had himself married a nun; and in this presence Martin Luther and

Catherine von Bora became man and wife. It was a nine days' wonder. Philip Melanchthon thought his friend was undone ; Luther himself was uneasy for a day or two. But the wonder passed off ; in the town there was hearty satisfaction and congratulation. The new Elector, John, was not displeased. The conversion of Germany was not arrested. Prussia and Denmark broke with Rome and accepted Luther's Catechism. In 1526, at Torgau, the Elector John, the Landgrave, the Dukes of Brunswick, Lüneberg, Anhalt, Mecklenburg, and Magdeburg, formed themselves into an Evangelical Confederacy. It was a measure of self-defence, for it had appeared for the moment as if the Emperor might again be free for a Papal crusade. The French had been defeated at Pavia ; Francis was a prisoner, and Christendom was at Charles's feet. But Francis was soon loose again. In the cross purposes of politics, France and the Pope became allies, and the Pope was the Emperor's enemy. Rome was stormed by a German-Spanish army ; and the Emperor, in spite of himself, was doing Luther's work in breaking the power of the great enemy. Then England came into the fray, with the divorce of Catherine and the assertion of

spiritual independence ; and the Protesant States were left in peace till calmer times and the meeting of the promised Council. In the midst of the confusion, Luther was able to work calmly on, ordering the churches, appointing visitors, or crossing swords with Erasmus, who looked on Luther much as the Pope did—as a wild boar who had broken into the vineyard. Luther, however violent in his polemics, was leading meanwhile the quietest of lives. He had taken his garden in hand ; he had built a fountain ; planted fruit trees and roots and seeds. He had a little farm ; he bought threshing instruments, and learned to use the flail. If the worst came to the worst he found that he could support his family with his hands.

Again, in 1530, it seemed as if the Emperor would find leisure to interfere. In the year before he had made a peace with the Pope and the French which, for the sake of Christendom and the faith, he hoped might be observed. The Turks had been under the walls of Vienna, but they had retreated with enormous loss, and seemed inclined at least to a truce. The Evangelicals began to consider seriously how far they might go in resistance should Charles attempt to coerce them into obedience.

Luther, fiery as he was in the defence of the faith, refused to sanction civil war. A Christian must suffer all extremities rather than deny his God ; but he might not fight in the field against his lawful sovereign. In worldly things the ruler was supreme, and the Emperor was the ruler of Germany. The Emperor, he said, had been chosen by the Electors, and by their unanimous vote might be deposed ; but he would not encourage either the Landgrave or his own Elector to meet force by force in separate action. The question never rose in Luther's lifetime, but the escape was a near one. A Diet at Speyer, in 1526, had decided that each prince should rule his own dominions in his own way, pending the expected Council. Charles's conscience would not allow him to tolerate a Lutheran communion if he could prevent it ; but he, too, dreaded a war of religion, of which no one could foresee any issue save the ruin of Germany. He knew and respected Luther's moderation, and summoned the Diet to meet him again at Augsburg, in the spring of 1530, to discover, if possible, some terms of reconciliation. The religious order which had been established in Saxony was recognised even at Rome with agreeable surprise, and the Leg-

ate who attended was said to be prepared with certain concessions. The Elector John intended to have taken Luther to the Diet with him, but at Coburg a letter met him from the Emperor, intimating that Luther, being under the ban of the empire, could not be admitted into his presence. The Elector went forward with Melanchthon and Jonas; Luther stayed behind in Coburg Castle, to work at his translation of the Bible, and to compare the rooks and jackdaws, when they woke in the morning, to gatherings of learned Doctors wrangling over their sophistries.

We have seen him hitherto as a spiritual athlete. We here catch a glimpse of him in a softer character. His eldest boy, Hans, had been born four years before. From Coburg he wrote him perhaps the prettiest letter ever addressed by a father to a child :—

Grace and peace in Christ, my dear little boy. I am pleased to see that thou learnest thy lessons well, and prayest well. Go on thus, my dear boy, and when I come home I will bring you a fine ‘fairing.’ I know of a pretty garden, where are merry children that have gold frocks, and gather nice apples and plums and cherries under the trees, and sing and dance, and ride on pretty horses with gold

bridles and silver saddles. I asked the man of the place whose the garden was, and who the children were. He said, ‘These are the children who pray and learn and are good.’ Then I answered, ‘I also have a son, who is called Hans Luther. May he come to this garden and eat pears and apples and ride a little horse, and play with the others?’ The man said, ‘If he says his prayers, and learns, and is good, he may come; and Lippus and Jost may come,’<sup>1</sup> and they shall have pipes and drums and lutes and fiddles, and they shall dance and shoot with little crossbows.’ Then he showed me a smooth lawn in the garden laid out for dancing, and there the pipes and drums and crossbows hung. But it was still early and the children had not dined; and I could not wait for the dance. So I said, ‘Dear sir, I will go straight home and write all this to my little boy; but he has an aunt, Lene,<sup>2</sup> that he must bring with him.’ And the man answered, ‘So it shall be; go and write as you say.’ Therefore, dear little boy, learn and pray with a good heart, and tell Lippus and Jost to do the same, and then you will all come to the garden together. Almighty God guard you. Give my love to aunt Lene, and give her a kiss for me.—Your loving father,

MARTIN LUTHER.

The Emperor meanwhile arrived at Augsburg on the 15th of June. Melanchthon, who was eager

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<sup>1</sup> Melanchthon’s son, Philip, and Jonas’s son Jodocus.

<sup>2</sup> Great-aunt, Magdalen.

for peace, had prepared a Confession of Faith, softening as far as possible the points of difference between the Evangelicals and the Catholics. It was laid before the Diet, and was received with more favour than Melanchthon looked for even by Charles himself. Melanchthon believed that spiritual agreement might be possible; Luther knew that it was impossible; but he did think that a political agreement might be arrived at; that the two creeds, which in so many essentials were the same, might be allowed to live side by side.

'Do not let us fall out,' he wrote to Cardinal Albert. 'Do not let us ruin Germany. Let there be liberty of conscience, and let us save our fatherland.' Melanchthon was frightened, and would have yielded much. Luther would not yield an inch. When no progress was made, he advised his friends to leave the Diet and come away. 'Threats do not kill,' he said. 'There will be no war.'

Luther understood the signs of the times. With the Turks in Hungary, and Henry VIII. and Francis in alliance, it was in vain that the Pope urged violent measures. The Evangelical Confession was not accepted, and the Emperor demanded submission. The Landgrave replied that if this was to be

the way, he would go home and take measures to defend himself. Charles, taking leave of the Elector, said sadly he had expected better of him ; the Elector's eyes filled with tears ; but he answered nothing. The end, however, was as Luther expected. Ferdinand of Austria and the Duke of Bavaria agreed to prohibit the advance of the new doctrines in their own dominions. It was decided, on the other hand, among the Protestant princes, that the Emperor's authority was limited, that resistance to unconstitutional interference was not unlawful, an opinion to which Luther himself unwillingly assented. The famous League of Schmalkald was formed for the general defence of spiritual liberty. Denmark held out a hand from a distance, and France and England courted an alliance, which would hold Charles in check at home. The Emperor and even Ferdinand, who was the more bigoted of the two brothers, admitted the necessity to which they were compelled to yield. The united strength of Germany was barely sufficient to bear back the Turkish invasion, and the political peace which Luther anticipated was allowed to stand for an indefinite period.

Luther was present at Schmalkald, where he

preached to the assembled representatives. On the day of the sermon he became suddenly and dangerously ill. His health had been for some time uncertain. He was subject to violent headaches and giddiness; he was now prostrated by an attack of ‘the stone,’ so severe that he thought he was dying. He had finished his translation of the Bible. It was now printed: a complete possession which he was able to bequeath to his countrymen. He conceived that his work was done, and life for its own sake had long ceased to have much interest for him. ‘At his age,’ he said, ‘with strength failing, he felt so weary, that he had no will to protract his days any longer in such an accursed world.’ At Schmalkald the end seemed to have come. Such remedies as then were known for the disease under which he was suffering were tried. Luther hated doctors; but he submitted to all their prescriptions. His body swelled, ‘They made me drink water,’ he said, ‘as if I was a great ox.’ Mechanical contrivances were employed, equally ineffectual, and he prepared to die. ‘I depart,’ he cried to his Maker, ‘a foe of Thy foes, cursed and banned by Thy enemy, the Pope. May he, too, die under Thy ban, and we both stand at Thy judgment bar on

that day.' The Elector, the young John Frederick—the Elector John, his father, was by this time gone—stood by his bed, and promised to care for his wife and children. Melanchthon was weeping. Even at that supreme moment Luther could not resist his humour. 'Have we not received good at the hand of the Lord,' he said, 'and shall we not receive evil? The Jews stoned Stephen; my stone, the villain, is stoning me.'

But he had some years of precious life yet waiting for him. He became restless, and insisted on being carried home. He took leave of his friends. 'The Lord fill you with his blessing,' he said, 'and with hatred of the Pope.' The first day he reached Tambach. The movement of the cart tortured him; but it effected for him what the doctors could not. He had been forbidden to touch wine. He drank a goblet notwithstanding. He was relieved, and recovered.

We need not specially concern ourselves with the events of the next few years. They were spent in correcting and giving final form to the translation of the Bible, in organising the churches, in correspondence with the princes, and in discussing the conditions of the long-talked-of Council, and of the

terms on which the Evangelicals would consent to take part in it. The peace of Nuremberg seemed an admission that no further efforts would be made to crush the Reformation by violence, and Luther was left to a peaceful, industrious life in his quiet home at Wittenberg. A very beautiful home it was. If Luther's marriage was a scandal, it was a scandal that was singularly happy in its consequences. The house in which he lived, as has been already said, was the old cloister to which he had first been brought from Erfurt. It was a pleasant, roomy building on the banks of the Elbe, and close to the town wall. His wife and he when they married were both penniless, but his salary as professor was raised to 300 gulden, and some small payments in kind were added from the university. The Elector sent him presents. Denmark, the Free Towns, great men from all parts of Europe, paid honour to the Deliverer of Germany with offerings of plate or money. The money, even the plate, too, he gave away, for he was profusely generous; and any fugitive nun or brother suffering for the faith never appealed in vain while Luther had a kreutzer. But in his later years his own modest wants were more than amply supplied. He bought a farm,

with a house upon it, where his family lived after his death. Katie, as he called his wife, managed everything; she attended to the farm, she kept many pigs, and doubtless poultry also. She had a fish pond. She brewed beer. She had a strong ruling, administering talent. She was as great in her way as her husband was in his.

‘Next to God’s Word,’ he said, ‘the world has no more precious treasure than holy matrimony. God’s best gift is a pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping wife, to whom you can trust your goods, and body, and life. There are couples who neither care for their families, nor love each other. People like these are not human beings. They make their homes a hell.’

The household was considerable. Five children were born in all. Hans, the eldest, to whom the letter from Coburg was written, died early. Elizabeth, the next daughter, died also very young. There were three others, Magdalen, Martin, and Paul. Magdalen von Bora, Katie’s aunt, the ‘Lene’ of the letter from Coburg, lived with the family. She had been a nun in the same convent with her niece. For her Luther had a most affectionate regard. When she was dying, he said to

her, ‘You will not die; you will sleep away as in a cradle, and morning will dawn, and you will rise and live for ever.’

Two nieces seem to have formed part of the establishment, and two nephews also. There was a tutor for the boys, and a secretary. A certain number of university students boarded in the house—lads perhaps of promise, in whom Luther had a special interest. To his children he was passionately devoted. He had no sentimental weakness; but the simple lightheartedness, the unquestioning confidence and trustfulness of children, was in itself peculiarly charming to him. Life when they came to maturity would bring its own sorrows with it. A few bright and happy years to look back upon would be something which could not afterwards be taken away. He refused boys and girls no kind of innocent enjoyment, and in all the anecdotes of his relations with them there is an exquisite tenderness and playfulness. His Katie he was not above teasing and occasionally mocking. She was a ‘Martha’ more than a ‘Mary,’ always busy, always managing and directing with an eye to business. He was very fond of her. He never seriously found fault with those worldly ways of hers, for

he knew her sterling worth ; but he told her once he would give her fifty gulden if she would read the Bible through. He called her his Herr Katie, and his Gnädige Frau. The farm which he had bought for her was called Zulsdorf. One of his last letters is addressed to ‘my heartily beloved housewife, Katherin Lady Luther, Lady Doctor, Lady Zulsdorf, Lady of the Pigmarket, or whatever else she may be.’

The religious education of his children he conducted himself. His daughter Magdalen was an unusually interesting girl. A picture of her remains, by Cranach, with large imaginative eyes. Luther saw in her the promise of a beautiful character ; she died when she was fourteen, and he was almost heart-broken. When she was carried to her grave he said to the bearers : ‘I have sent a saint to heaven : could mine be such a death as hers, I would die at this moment.’ To his friend Jonas he wrote :—‘You will have heard that my dearest child is born again in the eternal kingdom of God. We ought to be glad at her departure, for she is taken away from the world, the flesh, and the devil ; but so strong is natural love that we cannot bear it without anguish of heart, without the sense

of death in ourselves. When I think of her words, her gestures, when she was with us and in her departing, even Christ's death cannot relieve my agony.' On her tomb he wrote these lines:—

Hier schlaf Ich, Lenchen, Luther's Töchterlein,  
Ruh' mit all'n Heiligen in meine Bettlein.  
Die Ich in Sünden war geborn  
Hatt' ewig müssen seyn verlorn,  
Aber Ich leb nu und habs gut  
Herr Christe erlost mit deinem Blut.

Here do I Lena, Luther's daughter rest,  
Sleep in my little bed with all the Blest.  
In sin and trespass was I born,  
For ever was I thus forlorn ;<sup>1</sup>  
But yet I live, and all is good—  
Thou, Christ, redeem'st me with Thy blood.

There is yet another side to Luther, and it is the most wonderful of all. We have seen him as a theologian ; we have seen him standing up alone, before principalities and powers, to protest against spiritual lies ; we have seen him at home in the quiet circle of his household. But there is nothing in any of this to show that his thoughts had trav-

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<sup>1</sup> *Verloren*.—The word has travelled away from its original meaning.

elled beyond the limits of a special set of subjects. But Luther's mind was literally world-wide; his eyes were for ever observant of what was round him. At a time when science was scarcely out of its shell, Luther had observed Nature with the liveliest curiosity. He had anticipated by mere genius the generative functions of flowers. Human nature he had studied like a dramatist. His memory was a museum of historical information, of anecdotes of great men, of old German literature and songs and proverbs. Scarce a subject could be spoken of on which he had not thought, and on which he had not something remarkable to say. His table was always open, and amply furnished. Melanchthon, Jonas, Lucas Cranach, and other Wittenberg friends, were constant guests. Great people, great lords, great ladies, great learned men, came from all parts of Europe. He received them freely at dinner, and being one of the most copious of talkers, he enabled his friends to preserve the most extraordinary monument of his acquirements and of his intellectual vigour. On reading the *Tischreden* or Table-talk of Luther, one ceases to wonder how this single man could change the face of Europe.

Where the language is itself beautiful, it necessarily loses in translation ; I will endeavour, however, to convey some notion of Luther's mind as it appears in these conversations.

First, for his thoughts about Nature.

A tree in his garden was covered with ripe fruit. ‘ Ah,’ he said, ‘ if Adam had not fallen, we should have seen the beauty of these things—every bush and shrub would have seemed more lovely than if it was made of gold and silver. It is really more lovely ; but since Adam’s fall men see nothing, and are stupider than beasts. God’s power and wisdom are shown in the smallest flowers. Painters cannot rival their colour, nor perfumers their sweetness ; green and yellow, crimson blue, and purple, all growing out of the earth. And we do not know how to use them to God’s honour. We only misuse them ; and we trample on lilies as if we were so many cows.’

Katie had provided some fish out of her pond. Luther spoke of the breeding of fish, and what an extraordinary thing it was ; he then turned to the breeding of other creatures. ‘ Look at a pair of birds,’ he said. ‘ They build a neat little nest, and drop their eggs in it, and sit on them. Then come

the chicks. There is the creature rolled up inside the shell. If we had never seen such a thing before, and an egg was brought from Calicut, we should be all wondering and crying out. Philosophers cannot explain how the chick is made. God spake, and it was done : He commanded, and so it was. But he acts in all His works rather comically. If He had consulted me, I should have advised Him to make His men out of lumps of clay, and to have set the sun like a lamp, on the earth's surface, that it might be always day.'

Looking at a rose, he said, ' Could a man make a single rose, we should give him an empire ; but these beautiful gifts of God come freely to us, and we think nothing of them. We admire what is worthless, if it be only rare. The most precious of things is nothing if it be common.' In the spring, when the buds were swelling and the flowers opening, he exclaimed : ' Praise be to God the Creator, that now in this time of Lent out of dead wood makes all alive again. Look at that bough, as if it was with child and full of young things coming to the birth. It is a figure of our faith—winter is death, summer is the resurrection.'

He was sitting one night late out of doors. A

bird flew into a tree to roost. ‘That bird,’ he said, ‘has had its supper, and will now sleep safe as the bough, and leave God to care for him. If Adam’s fall had not spoilt us, we should have had no care either. We should have lived without pain, in possession of all kinds of knowledge, and have passed from time into eternity without feeling of death.’ The old question was asked why God made man at all if He knew that he would fall? Luther answered, that a great Lord must have vessels of dishonour in his house as well as vessels of honour. There were fellows who thought when they had heard a sermon or two, that they knew everything, and had swallowed the Holy Ghost feathers and all. Such wretches had no right to criticize the actions of God. Man could not measure structures of God’s building: he saw only the scaffolding. In the next life he would see it all; and then happy those who had resisted temptation.

Little Martin had been busy dressing a doll.

In Paradise (Luther said) we shall be as simple as this child who talks of God and has no doubts to trouble him. Natural merriment is the best food for children—and they are themselves the best of playthings. They speak and act from the heart. They believe in God without disput-

ing, and in another life beyond the present. They have small intellect, but they have faith, and are wiser than old fools like us. They think of heaven as a place where there will be eating and dancing, and rivers running with milk. Happy they! for they have no earthly cares, or fears of death or hell. They have only pure thoughts and bright dreams. Abraham must have had a bad time when he was told to kill Isaac. If God had given me such an order, I should have disputed the point with him.

'I never will believe,' said the downright Katie, 'that God ordered any man to kill his child.'

Luther answered: 'God had nothing dearer to Him than His own Son. Yet He gave Him to be hanged on the cross. In man's judgment He was more like a father to Caiaphas and Pilate than He was to Christ.'

The religious houses were falling all round Germany. Bishops losing their functions were losing their lands; and the nobles and burghers who had professed the Gospel were clutching at the spoils. Luther could see that ill had come with the change as well as good.

'Look,' he said sadly, 'at the time when the truth was unknown, and men were lost in idolatry, and trusted in their own works. Then was charity

without end or measure. Then it snowed with gifts. Cloisters were founded, and there were endowments for Mass priests. Churches were splendidly decorated. How blind is the world become.' Drunkenness, too, seemed to spread, and usury and a thousand other vices. It tried his faith. Yet he said, 'Never do we act better than when we know not what we are doing, or than when we think we are foolish and imprudent, for strength is perfected in weakness, and the best we do is what comes straight from the heart.'

The Protestants were not the only spoilers of the Church lands. Some one told a story of a dog at Lintz, which used to go every day with a basket to the market to fetch meat. One day some other dogs set upon him. He fought for his basket as long as he could; but when he could fight no longer he snatched a piece of meat for himself and ran away with it. 'There is Kaiser Karl,' said Luther. 'He defended the estates of the Church while it was possible. But when the princes all began to plunder, he seized a few bishoprics as his own share.'

He had a high respect generally for princes and nobles, and had many curious anecdotes of such

great persons. He did not think them much to be envied.

‘Sovereigns and magistrates,’ he said, ‘have weighty things to handle, and have a sore time with them. The peasant is happy ; he has no cares. He never troubles himself as to how the world is going. If a peasant knew what the prince has to bear, he would thank God that made him what he was. But he sees only the outside splendour, the fine clothes, the gold chains, the castles and palaces. He never dreams of the perils and anxieties that beset great lords while he is stewing his pears at his stove. The Elector Frederick used to say that the peasant’s life was the best of all ; and that happiness grew less at each step of the scale. The Emperor had most to trouble him, the princes next ; the nobles had endless vexations, and the burghers, though better off than the nobles, had their trade losses and other worries. The peasant could watch his crops grow by the grace of God ; he sold what was needed to pay his tithes and taxes, and lived in peace and quiet. The servants in a family are easier than their masters. They do their work, and eat and drink and sing. My people, Wolf and Dorothy (the cook), are bet-

ter off than I and Katie. The higher you stand, the more your danger. Yet no one is content with his position. When the ass is well off, he begins to caper, and breaks his leg.'

He loved and honoured his own Electors, but he thought they were over gentle. 'The Elector Frederick,' he said, 'was unwilling to punish evil doers. "Yes," he would say, "it is easy to take a man's life; but can you give it him back?" The Elector John would say, "Ah! he will be a good fellow yet." God is merciful, but He is also just. Yet Dr. Schurf, one of our best judges, and a Christian man, cannot bear to hang a felon. The proverb says: "A thief for the gallows, a monk for the cloister, and a fish for the water."

He had a respect for Pilate, and said some curious things about him. Pilate, he declared, was a better man than many Popish princes; he stood by the law, and would not have a prisoner condemned unheard. He tried many ways to release Christ; he yielded at last when he was threatened with Cæsar's anger. 'After all,' thought Pilate, 'it is but one poor wretch, who has no one to take His part; better He should die than the whole people become His enemies.' 'Why,' it was asked, 'did

Pilate scourge Christ?' 'Pilate,' Luther said, 'was a man of the world; he scourged Him in the hope that the Jews would then be satisfied.' When he asked Christ what truth was, he meant 'What is the use of speaking truth in such a scene as this? Truth won't help you; look for some trick of law, and so you may escape.' It was asked again what object the devil could have had in moving Pilate's wife to interfere. Luther seemed to admit that it was the devil. 'The devil,' he answered, 'said to himself, I have strangled ever so many prophets and have gained nothing by it; Christ is not afraid of death; better He should live, and I shall perhaps be able to tempt Him to do something wrong. The devil has fine notions in him; he is no fool.'

He had a high opinion of the Landgrave of Hesse, whom he called another Minnius. The Landgrave has a wild country, he said; but he keeps fine order in it, and his subjects go about their business in peace. He listens to advice, and when he has made up his mind he acts promptly, and has taught his enemies to fear him. If he would give up the Gospel he might ask the Emperor for what he pleased, and have it. At Augsburg he said to the bishops, 'We desire peace. If you will

not have peace and I must fall, be it so ; I shall not fall alone. The Bishop of Salzburg asked Archbishop Albert why he was so afraid of the Landgrave, who was but a poor prince. ‘My dear friend,’ the Archbishop replied, ‘if you lived as near him as I do, you would feel as I do.’

Singular things were spoken at Augsburg. A member of the Diet—his name is not preserved—said, ‘If I was the Emperor I would gather together the best of the Popish and Lutheran divines, shut them up in a house, and keep them there till they had agreed. I would then ask them if they believed what they had concluded upon and would die for it; if they said Yes, I would set the house on fire and burn them there and then to prove their sincerity. Then I should be satisfied that they were right.’

Luther always spoke well of Charles, in spite of the Edict of Worms.

Strange (he said) to see two brothers like him and Ferdinand so unlike in their fortunes. Ferdinand always fails, Charles generally succeeds. Ferdinand calculates every detail, and will manage everything his own way. The Emperor does plainly and simply the best that he can, and knows that in many things he must look through his

fingers. The Pope sent him into Germany to root us out and make an end of us. He came, and by the grace of God he has left us where we are. He is not bloody. He has true imperial gentleness and goodness—and fortune comes to him in his sleep. He must have some good angel.

When the Emperor was once in France in time of peace, he was entertained by the king at a certain castle. One night after supper a young lady of noble birth was, by the king's order, introduced into his room. The Emperor asked her who she was and how she came there. She burst into tears and told him. He sent her to her parents uninjured, with an escort and handsome presents. In the war which followed he levelled that castle to the ground.

The Antwerp manufacturers presented him with a tapestry once, on which was wrought for a design the battle of Pavia and the capture of the French king. Charles would not take it. He had no pleasure, he said, in the miseries of others.

Had Luther been a prophet he could have added another story still more to Charles's honour. Years after, when Luther was in his grave, and Charles, after the battle of Muhlberg, entered Wittenberg as a conqueror, some bishop pressed him to tear the body out of the ground and consign it to the flames. He replied, 'I war not with the dead.'

Much as Luther admired Charles, however, his own sovereigns had his especial honour.

The Elector Frederick (he said) was a wise, good man, who hated all display and lies and falsity. He was never married. His life was pure and modest, and his motto, ‘Tantum quantum possim,’ was a sign of his sense. Such a prince is a blessing from God. He was a fine manager and economist. He collected his own taxes, and kept his accounts strictly. If he visited one of his castles, he was lodged as an ordinary guest and paid his own bills, that his stewards might not be able to add charges for his entertainment. He gathered in with shovels and gave out with spoons. He listened patiently in his council, shut his eyes, and took notes of each opinion. Then he formed his own conclusion ; this and that advice will not answer, for this and that will come of it.

Elector John consulted me how far he should agree to the Peasants’ Articles at the time of the rebellion. He said : ‘God has made me a prince and given me many horses. If there is to be a change I can be happy with eight horses or with four. I can be another man.’ He had six young pages to wait on him. They read the Bible to him for six hours every day. He often went to sleep, but when he woke he had always some good text in his mouth. At sermon he took notes in a pocket-book. Church government and worldly government were well administered. The Emperor had only good to say of him.

If his brother and he could have been cast into a single man, they would have made a wonder between them. The Elector John had a strong frame and a hard death. He roared like a lion.

John Frederick (reigning elector in the latter part of Luther's life), though he hates untruth and loose living, is too indulgent. He fears God and has his five wits about him. God long preserve him. You never hear an unchaste or dishonourable word come out of his lips. One fault he has: he eats and drinks too much. Perhaps so big a body requires more than a small one. Otherwise he works like a donkey; and, drink what he will, he always reads the Bible before he sleeps.

Luther hated lies as heartily as the Elector. 'Lies,' he said, 'are always crooked, like a snake, which is never straight, whether still or moving—never till it is dead—then it hangs out straight enough.' But he was against violence, even to destroy falsehood. 'Popery,' he said, 'can neither be destroyed by the sword nor sustained by the sword; it is built on lies, it stands on lies, and can only be overthrown by truth. I like not those who go hotly to work. It is written, Preach and I will give thee power. We forget the preaching, and would fly to force alone.'

He much admired soldiers, especially if besides

winning battles they knew how to rule afterwards, like Augustus and Julius Cæsar.

When a country has a good prince over it, all goes well. Without a good prince things go backwards like a crab, and councillors, however many, will not mend them. A great soldier is the man ; he has not many words ; he knows what men are, and holds his tongue ; but when he does speak, he acts also. A real hero does not go about his work with vain imaginations. He is moved by God Almighty, and does what he undertakes to do. So Alexander conquered Persia, and Julius Cæsar established the Roman Empire. The Book of Judges shows what God can do by a single man and what happens when God does not provide a man. Certain ages seem more fruitful in great men than others. When I was a boy there were many. The Emperor Maximilian in Germany, Sigismund in Poland, Ladislaus in Hungary, Ferdinand, Emperor Charles's grandfather, in Spain—pious, wise, noble princes. There were good bishops too, who would have been with us had they been alive now. There was a Bishop of Wurzburg who used to say, when he saw a rogue, ‘To the cloister with you. Thou art useless to God or man.’ He meant that in the cloister were only hogs and gluttons, who did nothing but eat, and drink, and sleep, and were of no more profit than as many rats.

Luther knew that his life would be a short one. In his later days he compared himself to a knife

from which the steel has been ground away, and only the soft iron left. The Princess Elector said one evening to him : ‘ I trust you have many days before you. You may live forty years yet, if God wills.’ ‘ God forbid,’ Luther answered. ‘ If God offered me Paradise in this world for forty years I would not have it. I would rather my head was struck off. I never send for doctors. I will not have my life made miserable, that doctors may lengthen it by a twelvemonth.’

The world itself, too, he conceived to be near its end. The last day he thought would be in some approaching Lent, on a ruddy morning when day and night were equal.

The thread is unravelled out, and we are now visibly at the fringe. The present age is like the last withered apple hanging on the tree. Daniel’s four Empires—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—are gone. The Roman Reich lingers ; but it is the ‘ St. John’s drink ’ (the stirrup cup) and is fast departing. Signs in Heaven foretell the end. On earth there is building and planting and gathering of money. The arts are growing as if there was to be a new start, and the world was to become young again. I hope God will finish with it. We have come already to the White Horse. Another hundred years and all will be

over. The Gospel is despised. God's word will disappear for want of any to preach it. Mankind will turn into Epicureans and care for nothing. They will not believe that God exists. Then the voice will be heard 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh.'

Some one observed that when Christ came there would be no faith at all on the earth, and the Gospel was still believed in that part of Germany.

'Tush,' he said, 'it is but a corner. Asia and Africa have no gospel. In Europe, Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians, French, English, Poles, have no gospel. The small Electorate of Saxony will not hinder the end.'

I can but gather specimens here and there out of the four closely-printed volumes of these conversations. There is no such table-talk in literature, and it ought to be completely translated. I must take room for a few more illustrations. Luther was passionately fond of music. He said of it :—

Music is one of the fairest of God's gifts to man ; Satan hates music, because it drives away temptation and evil thoughts. The notes make the words alive. It is the best refreshment to a troubled soul ; the heart as you listen recovers its peace. It is a discipline too ; for it softens us

and makes us temperate and reasonable. I would allow no man to be a schoolmaster who cannot sing, nor would I let him preach either.

And again :—

I have no pleasure in any man who, like the fanatics, despises music. It is no invention of ours. It is a gift from God to drive away the devil and make us forget our anger and impurity and pride and evil tempers. I place music next to theology. I can see why David and all the saints put their divinest thoughts into song.

Luther's own hymns are not many ; but the few which he composed are jewels of purest water. One of them, the well-known—

Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott

remains even in these days of Rationalism the National Psalm of Germany. In the last great war the Prussian regiments went into battle chanting it.

Though no one ever believed more intensely in the inspiration of the Bible, he was no worshipper of the mere letter—for he knew that over a large part of Scripture the original text was uncertain. In translating he trusted more to instinctive perception than to minute scholarship. He said :—

I am no Hebraist according to grammar and rules. I do not let myself be tied, but go freely through. Translation is a special gift and grace. A man may know many languages, yet be unable to render one into another. The authors of the Septuagint were not good Hebrew scholars; St. Jerome was better; but, indeed, after the Babylonish captivity the language itself was corrupted. If Moses and the prophets rose again they would not understand the words which are given as theirs. When we were translating I gave my assistants these rules:—

Attend to the grammar, but remember

1. Holy Scripture speaks of the words and acts of God.
2. Prefer always in translating the Old Testament a meaning consistent with the New.

He could be critical, too, in his way. His objections to the Epistle of St. James are well known. He says of another book:—‘The story of Jonah is more incredible than any poet’s fable. If it were not in the Bible I should laugh at it. He was three days in the belly of a great fish! why, the fish would have digested him in three hours, and converted him into its own flesh and blood. The miracle of the Red Sea was nothing to this. The sequel, too, is so foolish—when he is released he begins to rave and expostulate and make himself miserable about a gourd. It is a great mystery.’

He shared in many of the popular superstitions. He believed in the reality of witchcraft, for instance. The devil he was convinced was personally present—perhaps omnipresent, doing every kind of mischief, and had many times assaulted himself. Many things might thus happen of a strange kind through the devil's agency. Nor was he quick to recognise new scientific discoveries.

'Modern astronomers,' he said, 'pretend that the earth moves, and not the sun and firmament—as in a carriage or a boat we seem to be motionless ourselves, while the trees and banks sweep past us. These clever fellows will believe nothing old, and must have their own ideas. The Holy Scripture says, Joshua bade the sun stand still, not the earth.'

But his powerful sense and detestation of falsehood gave him an instinctive insight into the tricks of charlatans. He regarded magic as unmixed imposture. He told a story of a Duke Albert of Saxony, to whom a Jew once offered a wonderful gem engraved with strange characters, alleging that it would make the wearer proof against cold steel and gunshot. 'I will try it first on thee,' the Duke said. He took the Jew out of doors with the gem on his neck, and ran his sword through him. 'So

it would have been with me,' he said, 'if I had trusted thee.'

Astrology, the calculation of a man's fortunes from the place of the planets among the stars, at the time of his birth was an accepted science. Erasmus might doubt, but Erasmus was almost alone in a world of believers. One other doubter was Luther, much to the scandal of his friend Melanchthon, with whom it was an article of faith. Melanchthon showed him the nativity of Cicero.

I have no patience with such stuff (Luther said). Let any man answer this argument. Esau and Jacob were born of the same father and mother, at the same time, and under the same planets, but their nature was wholly different. You would persuade me that astrology is a true science. I shall not change my opinion. I am bachelor, master, and have been a monk. But the stars did not make me either one or the other. It was my own shame that I was a monk, and grieved and angered my father. I caught the Pope by his hair, and he caught me by mine. I married a runaway nun, and begat children with her. Who saw that in the stars? Who foretold that? It is like dice-throwing. You say you have a pair of dice that always throw twice six —you throw two, three, four, five, six, and you take no notice. When twice six turns up, you think it proves your case. The astrologer is right once or twice, and boasts of

his art. He overlooks his mistakes. Astronomy is very well—astrology is naught. The example of Esau and Jacob proves it.

They prophesied a flood—another deluge in 1524. No deluge came, though Burgomaster Hohndorf brought a quarter-cask of beer into his house to prepare for it. In 1525 was the peasants' insurrection ; but no astrologer prophesied this. In the time of God's anger there was a conjunction of sin and wrath, which had more in it than conjunctions of the planets.

I must leave these recorded sayings, pregnant as they are, and full of character as they are.

I will add but one more. Luther said : ‘ If I die in my bed, it will be a grievous shame to the Pope. Popes, devils, kings, and princes have done their worst to hurt me ; yet here I am. The world for these two hundred years has hated no one as it hates me. I in turn have no love for the world. I know not that in all my life I have ever felt real enjoyment. I am well tired of it. God come soon and take me away.’

I return to what remains to be told of Luther's early life. The storm which threatened Germany hung off till he was gone. The House of Saxony was divided into the Ducal or Albertine line and

the Electoral or Ernestine line. Duke Henry dying was succeeded by the young Maurice, so famous afterwards. Maurice was a Protestant like the Elector; but he was intriguing, ambitious, and unscrupulous. Quarrels broke out between them, which a few years later brought the Elector to ruin. But Luther, as long as he lived, was able to keep the peace.

The Council of Trent drew near. After the peace with France, in 1544, the Pope began again to urge the Emperor to make an end of toleration. The free Council once promised, at which the Evangelical Doctors were to be represented, had been changed into a Council of Bishops, to be called and controlled by the Pope, before which the Evangelicals could be admitted only to plead as criminals. How such a Council would decide was not doubtful. The Protestant princes and theologians declined the position which was to be assigned to them, and refused to appear. It was but too likely that, if the peace continued, the combined force of the Empire and of France would be directed against the League of Schmalkald, and that the League would be crushed after all in the unequal struggle.

Luther saw what was coming, and poured out his indignation in the fiercest of his pamphlets. The ‘aller heiligst,’ ‘most holy’ Pope, became ‘aller höllish,’ ‘most hellish.’ The pretended ‘free Council’ meant death and hell, and Germany was to be bathed in blood. ‘That devilish Popery,’ he said, ‘is the last worse curse of the earth, the very worst that all the devils, with all their might, can generate. God help us all. Amen.’ Very dreadful and unbecoming language, the modern reader thinks, who has only known the wolf disguised in an innocent sheepskin. The wolf is the same that he was; and if ever he recovers his power, he will show himself unchanged in his old nature. In Luther’s time there was no sheepskin; there was not the smallest affectation of sheepskin. The one passionate desire of the See of Rome, and the army of faithful prelates and priests, was to carry fire and sword through every country which had dared to be spiritually free.

In the midst of these prospects Luther reached his last birthday. He was tired, and sick at heart, and sick in body. In the summer of 1545 he had wished to retire to his farm, but Wittenberg could not spare him, and he continued regularly to

preach. His sight began to fail. In January, 1546, he began a letter to a friend, calling himself ‘old, spent, worn, weary, cold, and with but one eye to see with.’ On the 28th of that month he undertook a journey to Eisleben, where he had been born, to compose a difference between the Counts Mansfelt. He caught a chill on the road, but he seemed to shake it off, and was able to attend to business. He had fallen into the hands of lawyers, and the affair went on but slowly. On the 14th of February he preached, and, as it turned out, for the last time, in Eisleben Church. An issue in the leg, artificially kept open to relieve his system, had been allowed to heal for want of proper attendance. He was weak and exhausted after the sermon. He felt the end near, and wished to be with his family again. ‘I will get home,’ he said, ‘and get into my coffin, and give the worms a fat doctor.’

But wife and home he was never to see again, and he was to pass from off the earth at the same spot where his eyes were first opened to the light. On the 17th he had a sharp pain in his chest. It went off, however; he was at supper in the public room, and talked with his usual energy. He

retired, went to bed, slept, woke, prayed, slept again ; then at midnight called his servant. ‘I feel strangely,’ he said : ‘I shall stay here ; I shall never leave Eisleben.’ He grew restless, rose, moved into an adjoining room, and lay upon a sofa. His two sons were with him, with his friend Jonas. ‘It is death,’ he said ; ‘I am going : “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”’

Jonas asked him if he would still stand by Christ and the doctrine which he had preached. He said ‘Yes.’ He slept once more, breathing quietly, but his feet grew cold. Between two and three in the morning he died.

The body lay in state for a day ; a likeness was taken of him before the features changed. A cast from the face was taken afterwards ; the athlete expression gone, the essential nature of him—grave, tender, majestic—taking the place of it, as his own disturbed life appears now when it is calmed down into a memory. The Elector, John Frederick, hurried to see him ; the Counts Mansfelt ended beside his body. The controversies which he had come to compose. On the 20th he was set on a car to be carried back to Wittenberg, with an armed escort of cavalry. The people of Eisleben

attended him to the gates. The church bells tolled in the villages along the road. Two days later he reached his last resting-place at Wittenberg. Melanchthon cried after him as they laid him in his grave: ‘My Father, my Father. The chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof.’

His will, which is extremely characteristic, had been drawn by himself four years before. He left his wife well provided for, and because legal proceedings might be raised upon his marriage, he committed her to the special protection of the Elector. Children, friends, servants, were all remembered.

Finally (he said), seeing I do not use legal forms, I desire all men to take these words as mine. I am known openly in Heaven, on Earth, and in Hell also; and I may be believed and trusted better than any notary. To me a poor, unworthy, miserable sinner, God, the Father of mercy, has entrusted the Gospel of His dear Son, and has made me therein true and faithful. Through my means many in this world have received the Gospel, and hold me as a true teacher, despite of popes, emperors, kings, princes, priests, and all the devil’s wrath. Let them believe me also in the small matter of my last will and testament, this being written in my own hand, which otherwise is not unknown. Let it be understood that here is the

earnest, deliberate meaning of Doctor Martin Luther, God's notary and witness in his Gospel, confirmed by his own hand and seal.—January 6, 1542.

Nothing remains to be said. Philosophic historians tell us that Luther succeeded because he came in the fulness of time, because the age was ripe for him, because forces were at work which would have brought about the same changes if he had never been born. Some changes there might have been, but not the same. The forces computable by philosophy can destroy, but they cannot create. The false spiritual despotism which dominated Europe would have fallen from its own hollowness. But a lie may perish, and no living belief may rise again out of the ruins. A living belief can rise only out of a believing human soul, and that any faith, any piety, is alive now in Europe, even in the Roman Church itself, whose insolent hypocrisy he humbled into shame, is due in large measure to the poor miner's son who was born in a Saxon village four hundred years ago.

THE END.



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